

# **Horizon**

REVIEW OF LITERATURE AND ART

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*by* K. T. BLUTH

**IVY GRIPPED THE STEPS**

*by* ELIZABETH BOWEN

POEMS *by* BORIS PASTERNAK *translated by* C. M. BOWRA

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*The editorial and publishing Offices of HORIZON are at 6 Selwyn House, Lansdowne Terrace, W.C.1.—Six months' subscription, 12/6 net. U.S.A.—\$3.25 (\$6.00 per annum).*

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## COMMENT

'REVOLUTIONS do not happen in this country, but every now and then the public gives a great heave of boredom and impatience and something is done with for ever.' These words from this column in April 1940 sum up the General Election. It was not a vote about queues or housing, but a vote of censure on Munich and Spain and Abyssinia, on the shrewd, glib, boisterous city-gent *faux bonhommes* 'all the old beaming second-rate faces' whose Christian names have echoed down the limelight since Wembley. The Election result is a blow struck against the religion of money. It has given us a Government of reasonable people, people like ourselves who are 'we', not 'they', and who are unlikely to become over-excited by power or to use the word 'intellectual' as an insult, like some of the millionaire hoodlums whom we have just put out. 'There is no place for culture in wartime'—or in peacetime, it would seem, for its opposite.

The new Parliament is one of the few good things to have come out of the war, a proof of the wisdom and vitality of the people, and of its desire to be more integrated with its rulers. It immensely strengthens our position on the Continent and gives England a chance to implement the anti-fascist propaganda which we have poured out for the last five years and so to become that unique thing—a great power which is not greatly hated.

Morally and economically Europe has lost the war. The great marquee of European civilization in whose yellow light we all grew up, and read or wrote or loved or travelled has fallen down; the side-ropes are frayed, the centre-pole is broken, the chairs and tables are all in pieces, the tea-urns empty, the roses are withered on their stands, and the prize marrows; the grass is dead. France, Italy, Germany, Austria are now but names to many of the Americans and Russians who are their custodians: never have occupying armies had less use for the countries they invest. The gulf between the civilizations has grown too wide. Each European country is struggling in silence against its particular disease; famine, bombed cities, blasted communications, black markets, corrupt minorities, jealous neighbours—or the insidious legacies of German occupation. While the sickness



of Germany fills those who observe it with despair the condition of France is for her visitors almost as alarming. Something is badly wrong, and all the ills which in January were put down to the war, the occupation, the German armies in the Ardennes or the rigours of winter, I found by July to have been aggravated. While those who come back from Germany are astounded and yet somehow shocked by the beaver-like industry, servility and desire to co-operate of the conquered, those who go to France are appalled by the moral apathy, the physical slowness of recovery of the less-damaged nation. The French are immensely mistrustful of each other; they all accuse each other of not working, and of being dishonest. They still talk of nothing but collaboration and seem to think that the interminable (and not very dignified) trial of Petain was a kind of positive reconstructive effort. But you can break a great many eggs without making an omelette and you can shoot a great many collaborators without getting an administration. Probably few Frenchmen are more perturbed about conditions there than those round de Gaulle, especially his younger collaborators, yet the remedies they propose, derived from their military education and ideas of *La Gloire*, are hopelessly inadequate for the symptoms. France is much too sick to get up and march with a banner in the procession. The gap between rich and poor is grotesquely wide, nobody trusts anyone, hundreds of tiny newspapers appear, each jealously guarding their right to have nothing to say; the cost of living is prohibitive. The shops have nothing to sell, the trains are among the slowest and dirtiest in the world, yet to get a seat in them is almost impossible, everything looks more beautiful and otherwise quite unchanged since before the war, yet the whole atmosphere is subtly Balkanized. The black market flourishes like a giant fungus, the Resistance is bitter and disillusioned, edged out of its commanding position by the Central Government; the Government, conscious of its anomalous position and the impending elections, is bitter too. The socialist party has been slow in recovering its organization and its fighting spirit, and the communists have improved their position at their expense. But the real trouble lies deeper—the soul of France is sick—the country has had a nervous breakdown—there is confusion about what France is and ought to be. As before, it is only with the groups of Resistance writers and artists, those who centre



round Fontaine, Poèsies, Lettres Françaises, or Paulhan, Malraux, Queneau, Sartre or Camus, that one has the sensation of vital movement, of the mind in flower.

I spent the 14th of July wandering about the bleached tropical city rejoicing with accordions and fireworks (a proletarian city, like all capitals today) and trying to decide what was missing. For one thing, about ten thousand American girls, with their satchels and sketch books, their exotic looks and wholesome voices to animate all the small hotels on the Left Bank, now miserably functionless and sombre; then a quantity of genuine artists and writers from other countries, lovers of Paris and serious ease, to argue in cafés and crouch in the bookshops, and stay too long over lunch. Then a lot of rich tourists and Latin Americans to pour money into every tattered courtyard and shabby street, and last a French Government which would welcome all this money and food and appreciation with dignity while continuing to experiment in the new possibilities of living and thinking and painting that have made this most beautiful of all northern cities pre-eminent. For it is no good if France becomes another Venice, a garden and museum with forty million people going bad in it—only federation, a federation of the Western European democracies—with Africa as the model farm—and American good will—can put up the marquee again. Or so I hoped—but by then I was walking along the quays by the Seine, it was after midnight, the opaque green river slid by the immense poplars, and I knew that my reflections on these political nostrums were a kind of middle-aged mumbling over the grave of youth, for even were this young man's Paris to be resurrected, who can give back the eyes and heart which first explored it?

‘Weh mir, wo nehm’ich, wenn  
Es Winter ist, die Blumen, und wo  
Den sonnenschein  
Und Schatten der Erde?’<sup>1</sup>

And London? What can the new Government do about that? I flew over from Le Bourget the other day. In France there was a

<sup>1</sup> ‘Ah, grief, where do I take, when  
Winter comes, the flowers, and where  
The Sunshine  
And shadows of the Earth?’

[HÖLDERLIN. *Translated by* VERNON WATKINS]

small heat-wave, and the sunshine extended over the sand-dumplings of Le Touquet, over the Channel, like a clean blue blotter, and the scarred elephant-hide of Dungeness. Suddenly we saw from the plane a vast thick cloud of sooty mucus, and below it ring-worm circles of brick villas, grey and gloomy factories and towers; the Thames, an industrial river, just too far to the south of everything to matter, and the complacent phallus of the Ministry of Information! A tiny oval of grey-green was Regent's Park—another break in the brick was Hampstead Heath—then the ring-worm of new suburbs erupts again, with buses playing in the roundabouts, and we land at Hendon. This iron cloud of August phlegm has never moved since, and still lowers over forty miles of London. What can be done to bring the weather above the clouds to the people beneath it? And to clean up the great mess which the last hundred years of unplanned development has made:

Londoners are perhaps luckiest who have never seen the light and colour or the planned architectural compactness which is to be found abroad, but for those who know what urban life can be like—in Munich or Zurich or Barcelona—the ordeal is becoming unendurable. It is not enough to patch up the wartime shabbiness, to improve the dirt and dust, the queues, the stuffy restaurants and pubs, or to rebuild the ruined buildings—a vast deal more has to be pulled down before anything can be put up again. There are admirable signs that the Abercrombie plan will be followed, and that London will be made smaller, not bigger, as a result—but what a winter this is going to be in this most favoured of European countries—no coal, though the earth is stiff with it; no wine, though the cellars of Bordeaux are full; no servants, though there are millions of displaced personages who would be only too glad to find places; no trips abroad, no access to snow or sun: only art and a little politics to keep warm by. After the surfeit of victory celebrations I should like to see one of the gloomiest winter days set apart as a day of global mourning, when all Europe mourns its dead—and also its folly—and resolves never to make the same mistakes again. And I should also like to see, as a global war-memorial, the abolition of the death-penalty, for until the State sets us the example of holding life sacred, it can hardly expect its members to—and such a credo is the unique reply to the atomic bomb.



## POSTSCRIPT.—

I learnt in Paris that the case of Montherlant is far from closed, and that a judicial inquiry is being made into his conduct, which will take far more evidence into consideration than the Committee of Writers mentioned by Montgomery Belgion. I say this not as one who wishes to hound one of the ablest of living writers, but to corroborate Messrs. Toynbee, de Hoghton and Debû-Bridel.

## BORIS PASTERNAK

### POEMS

[*Translated from the Russian by C. M. BOWRA*]

#### IN THE WOOD

A lilac heat was heavy on the meadow,  
High in the wood cathedral's darkness swelled.  
What in the world was left still for their kisses?  
It was all theirs, soft wax in fingers held.

Such is the dream:—you do not sleep, but only  
Dream that you thirst for sleep, that someone lies  
Asleep, and through his dream beneath his eyelids  
Two black suns sear the lashes of his eyes.

Rays flowed, and with the ebbing flowed the beetles;  
Upon his cheeks the dragon-flies' gloss stirs.  
The wood was full of careful scintillations,  
As under pincers at the clockmaker's.

They shift them round about, and shake the needles,  
Scatter shadow, and swing, and bore a place  
For darkness like a mast erected upward  
In day's decline upon its blue clock-face.

It seems that ancient happiness flits over,  
It seems, sleep's setting holds the woodland close.  
Those who are happy do not watch clocks ticking,  
But sleep, it seems, is all this couple does.

*From* I CAN FORGET THEM

So they begin. With two years gone  
From nurse to countless tunes they scuttle.  
They chirp and whistle. Then comes on  
The third year, and they start to prattle.

So they begin to see and know.  
In din of started turbines roaring  
Mother seems not their mother now,  
And you not you, and home is foreign.

What meaning has the menacing  
Beauty beneath the lilac seated,  
If to steal children's not the thing?  
So first they fear that they are cheated.

So ripen fears. Can he endure  
A star to beat him in successes,  
When he's a Faust, a sorcerer?  
So first his gipsy life progresses.

So from the fence where home should lie  
In flight above are found to hover  
Seas unexpected as a sigh.  
So first iambs they discover.

So summer nights fall down and pray  
'Thy will be done' where oats are sprouting  
And menace with your eyes the day.  
So with the sun they start disputing.

So verses start life on its way.



*From* SECOND BIRTH

We're few, perhaps not more than three,  
Flaming, infernal, from the Don,  
Beneath a sky racing and grey  
Of rain, clouds, soldiers bent upon  
Soviets, verses and long talk  
Of transport and the artist's work.

Once we were men, we're epochs now,  
Knocked, whirling in a caravan,  
Like tundra 'neath the tender's sough,  
While pistons, sleepers rattle on.  
We'll join our flights, break through, make touch,  
Spun round in ravens' eddying rush.

And on! Later you'll understand.  
So at dawn striking on piled straw,  
Instantly hurling all around,  
The wind becomes eternal where  
Trees in a meeting's stormy din  
Talk as a ruined roof falls in.

*From* THEME AND VARIATIONS

Stars raced headlong. Seaward headlands lathered.  
Salt spray blinded. Eyes dried up their tears.  
Darkness filled the bedrooms. Thoughts raced headlong.  
To Sahara Sphinx turned patient ears.

Candles guttered. Blood, it seemed, was frozen  
In the huge Colossus. Lips at play  
Swelled into the blue smile of the desert.  
In that hour of ebb night sank away.

Seas were stirred by breezes from Morocco.  
Simoom blew. Archangel snored in snows.  
Candles guttered. Rough draft of *The Prophet*<sup>1</sup>  
Dried, and on the Ganges dawn arose.

<sup>1</sup> Pushkin's poem of the name.

K. T. BLUTH

# THE REVIVAL OF SCHELLING

IN the year 1790 the University of Tübingen numbered among its students three young men of genius who were to acquire European fame: Hölderlin, Hegel and Schelling. These three were close friends and descendants of common ancestors.

Joseph von Schelling became the philosophical head of the Romantic movement which flourished in Germany about 1800. He lectured in Jena, and there created a philosophy which dominated contemporary thought. He felt himself united with nature, and nature represented to him an unconscious power of 'genesis'. Nature worked in everything. Nature inspired his own mind with a power of intuition and synthesis. Nature made him her mouthpiece, declaiming to all creation:

'I am God cherished in the womb of earth, the mind moving in all things. From the dark birth-throes of primeval life; from the dayspring in whose ichor cell bred cell and the first burgeoning of buds and boughs; from that transfiguring and pristine ray which like a new creation burst the night and lit the heavens with unnumbered eyes; there is one force, one changing avatar, one bent. One impulse towards ever higher life.'

To Schelling, everything in existence was a manifestation of the natural power of genesis. Nature was always in the process of creation: although the shapes of her past history had petrified into apparent immutability, they were, to use another image, no more than a veil, or garment wrapping the act of eternal production. Nature in fact was a poem; art and nature being finite manifestations of an infinite creation: and all inward impulses experienced subjectively on the plane of feeling became objectified externally as shapes and symbols.

Art and Nature displayed no differing features: art was as creative as nature and became its interpreter, reuniting the real and the ideal, matter and spirit, object and subject, infinite and finite. The power and breath of creation remained identical



within all these opposites: Schelling called it the metaphysical 'Identity' of all things.

Schelling's philosophy is not easily understood on account of his traditional terminology. His phrases are misleading. They represent more or less conventional concepts for the difference between the self and things which do not belong to it. The functional process of discrimination between things and ego had been misinterpreted by Descartes and artificially differentiated as two principles, 'thought' and 'extension'; both of which Spinoza looked upon as qualities of one single metaphysical substance. Schelling believed in Spinoza's doctrine, and conceived the difference between 'subject' and 'object' as that between thought and extension. Unfortunately, he did not elucidate these obsolete terms which, being relics of archaic thought, were open to criticism. Instead of abolishing them, he added further obscurities of his own by concentrating on such philosophical conundrums as the 'Indifference and Identity of the Absolute'. In Schelling's opinion, qualities which ordinary thought processes were incapable of grasping could be recognized through a sort of mystical insight or 'intellectual intuition': and as it is the very essence of his philosophy to remove all distinctions of time, space and structure, the result is a detrimental lack of precise meaning in the terms, words and metaphysical 'concepts' he uses. Everything remains vague, and feeling has to take the place of exact sense. Indeed, one begins to understand Schelling as soon as one starts to feel oneself into his doctrine instead of apprehending it intellectually. What he described in his philosophy was a change of heart.

The Renaissance had created a belief in personality; propagating the idea that individuals should become independent of organized religions, of churches and intellectual conventions, through the process of mental development. Everyone should think for himself without relying on any religious prop, since man himself was a creative being. If a painter created a horse it was not any particular animal which took shape on his canvas, but a representation of the idea 'horse', symbolized by this special beast. It was not any individual shape, but an ideal beauty which the Renaissance artist was eager to create in his picture. Gallileo was not interested in the fall of a special stone, but in the rule and principle by which all falling objects were governed. The

laws of the physical world were to be recreated in the light of science, thus enabling man to control the forces of nature. By means of the mechanical devices which he constructed, Leonardo da Vinci dreamed of imposing his will on nature in the same way as the Lord had commanded the wind and the sea. Man as a thinking individual was capable of attaining divinity. God Himself was no longer mysterious since His powers could be found and studied in any outstanding individual who was highly conscious and sure of himself: as in the legend of Prometheus who brought to earth from the heavenly spaces light and lucidity of thought.

This ideal of the creative personality continued to be the theme of philosophical thought on the Continent. Descartes, Leibnitz and Kant all dwelt on the creative powers of the mind. To Leibnitz the ego became divine, a representation and image of God, while Kant regarded the ego as the creator, not only of single objects, but of everything in existence. Fichte went even further, believing that all external things (things which did not belong to the ego) were separated from himself only by his subconsciousness, and were really only parts of his own split personality, capable of being reconquered and reabsorbed by means of strong ethical action on his part.

The cult of the Renaissance individual persisted even in the case of Goethe, who, to the German people, seemed to dwell more on Olympus<sup>1</sup> than on earth. Goethe certainly considered himself as a monad, created in the image of God, and it was for the sake of his own divinity that he polished himself to perfection. He was anxious to unite to his ego everything which was not a part of it; all branches of science, all new thoughts and new arts; in fact all things in the outer world. To keep up his delusion of being identical with the Creator, he struggled to be comprehensive and universal, attempting to annex the non-ego by absorbing all its detail into his ego, destroying and spiritually consuming the outer world until nothing but he himself remained in existence.

Schelling's attitude was different. He thought that his ego was created by this very non-ego which Goethe tried to absorb and Fichte was anxious to destroy. To him, this non-ego represented by the outer world was 'Nature', a sacred element

<sup>1</sup> Leibnitz's metaphysical unit.



full of life, not a world of dead matter to be done away with or swallowed up. He thought of nature as a sensitive physical organism; his own mother by whom he had been created and whom he worshipped as a fertile goddess ever big with rich increase. His language became tender when he wrote of his mother Nature. He called her Night (as Hölderlin did), the womb of darkness and 'identity' where every distinction fades and all things reunite, melting into one another's beings by right of their common birth. Thither both he and Hölderlin longed to return; into the great maternal womb of oneness. They felt isolated and discouraged by the strain and the cold honour of being 'individuals'. They did not wish to stand on pedestals. They felt their pronounced individuality as something painful which prevented them from living a common life with those they loved. Personality was a cage imprisoning their true natures. Looking at Goethe, they wondered whether even he could escape the magic boundaries of his obsessional character. Was he not buried alive in the tomb of his ego? 'So you must be! You can not escape yourself!' he had written in one of his poems. Was it not possible for a new generation to heed Goethe's grievances and escape the danger of being individuals altogether?

Schelling broke the spell of the Renaissance by inventing a philosophy which counteracted the over-valuation of individuality. He saw that the ego was not in itself intrinsically creative, but remained sterile until fertilized by the dreams and desires of the unconscious nature which lived its own independent life within the physical being. He recognized that not we ourselves but the nature within us directed our thoughts and actions and finally our fates: that 'man proposes, God disposes' as the old saying expresses it.

The writers of the romantic school steered themselves back into the harbour of medieval thought, turning away from the light and plasticity of the present to make their spiritual home in the past. Instead of following the Greek pattern of classical beauty which Goethe had loved for the greater part of his life, they pursued the Gothic ideal that inspired the medieval cathedrals. They started as mystics and finished as Catholics. They did not feel alienated from Lutherdom for æsthetic reasons, but more by the fact that Protestantism was linked up with the emancipation of the individual. The Romanticists hated their ego and wanted

to get rid of it. In order to achieve this object, some of them even took opium, the drug described by Carl Gustav Carus as the crystallized substance of the unconscious, able to carry a soul home to its dark origin. It was the spirit of night which Novalis found in the 'magic oil' of its brown juice. To these people opium was not a dangerous drug nor a symbol of delusion, but a draught of reality, and through its influence they found a way to that secret land which they thought of as their true home. Catholicism fulfilled the same function to the Romantics: it was another opium; but not in any delusory sense. It was to them equivalent to the 'δντως', and represented the highest degree of reality.

Schelling had been in close contact with Novalis and Hölderlin. When he spoke of nature he must have known all about opium. He had been through a course of medical training in Bamberg where the famous Roschlaub exalted opium almost to the position of a miracle drug. (It was from Roschlaub, too, that Novalis obtained the drug which he was accustomed to use as a stimulant.) Opium broke down the barrier between ego and non-ego. It reunited the lonely spirit with nature. Opium was nature itself: it penetrated into the innermost region of the spirit, submerging individual consciousness like the rising tide of a sea. What the church was to Schlegel, opium was to Novalis, and 'nature' to Schelling. It was night and the mother-womb of the unconscious into which his solitary and exiled soul longed to return.

The best way to understand Schelling's philosophy is to approach it in the spirit of a dreamer. Textbooks point out that he was 'influenced' by a great many thinkers: that he had started as a follower of Kant and Fichte from whom he very soon dissociated himself; that he worked at a synthesis 'of Spinozism and Idealism'; that afterwards he became 'influenced' by Gnosticism, turned Theosophist, and finally accepted Christianity. But all these conventional terms are vague. Nobody knows exactly what is meant by 'Spinozism'. The term 'nature', too, had different meanings for Schelling and for Spinoza: to Schelling it signified an organism; to Spinoza a mechanism. 'Thinking' meant conceptual thinking to Spinoza. To Schelling it was preconceptual—in the main a process of feeling and empathy. Exactly what is to be understood by the word 'Idealism' is also doubtful. Schelling was not interested in its ethical meaning.

If it related to the unreality of appearances, he was not concerned with it either. The 'ideal' to him meant the opposite to the 'real', and yet the two were identical. This fundamental thesis sounds very similar to Spinoza's belief. But Schelling does not envisage a 'substance'. His conception is of a force possessing the power of materializing a polarity by means of a newly created tension at some neutral point. Schelling believed in a state of nothingness whereas Spinoza believed in a something. Schelling's nullity was neither 'thinking' nor 'extension'; but Spinoza's 'something' included both everywhere, and was eternally existent. The mechanism of causation in Spinoza's world of extension ran parallel to God's reasoning. But Schelling's divinity was not related to a mechanism of causes: to him thinking was 'genesis'; the creating of patterns and shapes. The formation of leaves for instance was achieved by such a process of constructive shaping. This was true not only of leaves and trees; stones and minerals were also moulded into their pattern by thought: every molecule and atom behaved rationally in guiding itself into the shape of its innermost structure. Stones, trees and minerals were alive. Their life consisted of tension, and their tension organized itself into thinking. They were units, monads, which shaped themselves from within. God did not make them from outside, nor did He rule them by mechanical laws. Every seed was a law unto itself, living through the intelligence of its formative unit which was an expression of God's wisdom and being. Schelling believed more in Leibnitz than he did in Spinoza. He saw the universe as consisting of intellects which mirrored the uniform essence of a mystic single creation: his own nature shaped itself through the formative impulses inherent in all organisms. Things were not made; they grew.

The clue to Schelling's thought lies in the emotional insight which he shared with Leibnitz and Spinoza; the feeling that all created things were identical. For this neo-pagan mysticism (which had nothing to do with Christianity), Giordano Bruno was burned at the stake. The mystic had no need to believe in the Christian God because nature was God to him. Nature, therefore, constituted a source of danger to the Christian mind. The medieval monks called the nightingale the wife of the devil: and according to their way of thinking all cherry and apple trees lived and blossomed in sin.



When St. Francis fell in love with nature he confused God with the devil. Christian love had nothing in common with the love-making of fish. To the puritans nature was always bad and always to be suppressed. Schelling's love of nature was certainly not puritanical; his love for Karoline Schlegel was genuine and without reservation. It was much later that he became bitter about the beautiful things of the world. During the period that he was with Karoline he wrote about the coincidence of all opposites and his belief in one universal world soul. What he wrote at this time was paganism and pantheism, and had no connection with the religious doctrines and prejudices of any church. He did not believe in miracles or in the resurrection of flesh: he believed, as Kepler did, in the miracle of natural causes. Man being created by Nature and himself an extension of nature, should be able to understand her secrets by understanding himself. 'γινωθι σεαυτόν': When a citizen of ancient Greece sought wisdom in this way he did what was called 'myein', closing his eyes. He became introverted. Schelling was undoubtedly a mystic in the Greek sense of the word.

His original doctrine was based upon introspection and he had started with a method which was introspective. He believed with Descartes, Kant and Fichte in the necessity of examining and understanding one's own self. He saw that all perceptions and concepts originated in the mind: that there was nothing ready-made in the outer world: that the mind had to make the best of sensations by co-ordinating and interpreting them and building them up into things. Schelling knew that colours were waves of light in the outer world and not colours at all: that chairs and carpets and tables were tables and carpets and chairs, not in the mind of the nightingale, but only in the minds of people who knew how to sit on chairs and walk on carpets and to write on tables. He accepted the dogma that it was really the mind which created a thing, by conceiving it as a unit. He saw that things in which the realist believed were delusions: that a key was a key only for people who knew its purpose, and that the same piece of metal might be kept by some native as the beard of a ghost. In this he was a disciple of Fichte, Kant, Leibnitz and Plato.

However, things consisted of matter, and matter existed in a world which did not belong to the mind. To Descartes, mind

and matter were the two irreconcilable substances; and it was hard to explain this away, once subject and object had been falsely identified with thought and extension.

But Kant had already shown that even matter and extension were merely 'categories'—modes of interpretation for a thinking individual—and that they did not exist apart from the mind. Everything which did not belong to Fichte's concept of the 'ego' could be reunited with it under this conception. The whole non-ego which had been described as 'object', 'reality', 'matter', became a specialized part of Fichte's ego as well. His ego was able not only to contain the universe, but to effect the reconciliation of opposites; matter and mind, subject and object, ideal and real, the infinite and the finite, the universal and the particular. Fichte's ego became, so to speak, a geometrical point for the '*coincidentia oppositorum*'. Schelling took advantage of this. By mystical concentration upon the nature of his own ego—by 'intellectual intuition' as he called it—he attained a state of mind in which subject and object were identical; in which sensations were experienced without being objectified; where pain was pain and at the same time its painful perception. This pain was object and subject in one. It was 'being' as well as knowledge. It represented mind and matter combined. In the depths of his own self Schelling discovered a point of indifference where opposites became identical. By sinking down into the unconscious it was possible to amalgamate with things which belonged to the non-ego: subjects became identified with their objects and turned into light and colour and sound; into songs and words and miracles of beauty; into the knowledge of nature, and into nature itself; into laws of art and of science; into the being of plants and of animals; into the shapes and souls of the great universe; into God's nothingness and God's wisdom. To feel oneself identical with all things was a strange experience. It was the way of escape from the cage of personality: the way home to the nature-mother buried in one's own unconscious. This unconscious was no longer subject or object, mind or matter, mother or child. It was the womb and the tomb, neither you nor I, but both of us, united in absolute identity with the soul of the universe. Beneath our human ego there was a place where all things were identical; but this region could only be reached by falling into that trance-like sleep in which all

differences disappear. It was a sacred sleep, becoming almost as deep as death, at the actual moment when 'wiederkehrt uralte Verwirrung'. The daylight consciousness gave no reply to metaphysical questions. These ideas have been revived by the Swiss psychologist Jung. The wisdom of dreams was alone empowered to teach man the answers whenever the preconscious, subconscious and unconscious could be induced to speak in their sleep. The subconscious and unconscious were not those of an empirical ego, but they belonged to the non-ego as well. The unconscious was already the it, the thing in itself. The ego of any person was not the it, because it was too complex. (A matter of fact, it has been always too differentiated. It has become divided in itself and separated from its origin. Mature and fully differentiated brains of human beings objectify sensations into perceptions which inform the mind about individual things. But if the mind falls asleep, our being returns to the primitive state of indifferentiated structure, and the unit of our personality becomes disintegrated. Our brain regresses and atavistic functions of life and protoplasm reappear and occupy the domain of our normal consciousness. These were the atavistic functions that interested Schelling. They were the thoughts of the group soul, archetypes, memories and experiences which shape mankind. They were the living thoughts of past cras and the clairvoyant outlines of the future. When the mind was deeply hypnotized it returned into that magic state of identity where it became reunited with nature, God, and the 'mothers'. The voice of God Himself might be heard if He could be made to speak while under the influence of hypnosis. When in this state one could utter words of divine wisdom like the Delphic priestess who was hypnotized by narcotic fumes. Opium could induce a similar sleep in which the dreamer would remember his origin and look again, as Plato did, at the shape of living ideas. Schelling really put into practice a narcoanalysis of nature. If a mind could sleep deeply enough it would see the One—the 'Identity', or the 'Absolute'—as Plotinus recorded that he had done once or twice in his life.

As has already been said, the only way to understand Schelling is to feel oneself into what he attempts to explain. Such ideas as 'absolute identity' and 'point of indifference' only become comprehensible in terms of psychological experience. As 'concepts',



the 'point of indifference' (indistinguishableness of things) and 'absolute identity' are void of meaning, for Schelling himself declared that his Absolute could not be thought of as a thing. These terms are as negative as the term 'substance' was for Spinoza when it became a pantheistic principle. The difference between Spinoza and Schelling lies in their approach to this last principle of emptiness. Spinoza arrived at his idea of a single substance by calculation; by eliminating attributes one by one in the progress towards abstraction until the ultimate universal became meaningless. Schelling, on the other hand, approached God and His Identity by dreaming and falling asleep. He did not form his concept of God by means of mere thought-processes, but actually identified himself with the Creator in that trance-like state where all distinguishing attributes and all traces of differentiation were lost.

In his reunion with nature and eternal identity, he felt within himself the quality of the 'it' which he describes as 'will', 'force', and 'tension'. Tension originated neither as matter nor thought, but was bound to develop into both as soon as it was released from its state of suspense. It would then become a pattern (archetype or idea), the outward appearance of which would be the exact expression of its inner thought. To Schelling, soul and body were expressions of one and the same force. The body realizing itself in a space of extension became static, while its inner tension or soul constituted its dynamic tendencies, developing its fate and life history through periods of time. But the first impulse described by Schelling in his trance experience of 'intellectual intuition' was a cosmogenic principle, as anything resulting from it was organic. Cosmos and organism were synonymous. Whatever happened in the organic sphere constituted something more than a mechanical process: it was 'becoming' (Werden), a growth or a genesis. Schelling did not agree with Fichte, who thought that the world had been created by means of intellectual actions: he knew better after his reunion with nature in the dark womb of identity. From his own experience he deduced that there was no deed nor violent impulse in the beginning, but only the growth of shapes. There was no conscious mind struggling with the inert resistance of dead matter obstructing any kind of spiritual outlook. In the beginning there was neither mind nor matter; only the force of a melody

which was infinite and became finite while growing and elaborating its shape. There was no matter without shape. Its energy was in a state of suspension.

Schelling has been mercilessly criticized by scientists and by so-called philosophers who, believing in the eternal value of concepts, refused to accept any part of his mysticism. It is well known that Hegel wounded him to the quick by laughing at his 'identity-night' where, of course, 'tous les chats sont gris'. But many of Schelling's ideas were justified later. At the time when he dreamed of the structural properties of matter (which he described as force and tension suspended between poles of electricity), nobody knew that molecules and atoms were structural units consisting of electrons which encircled protons in polar tension. Nobody knew that life consisted of cells which developed by differentiating from a state of simplicity and identity. There was nobody then who could say that nature was constantly evolving new forms: that from the most primitive protoplasm, plants and animals were developing continuously into more and more complex organisms: that there was a transition from one type of animal to another; from one vertebrate to a higher specimen, until the human being was evolved; that even among men the evolutionary level varied tremendously. Schelling was no scientist, but his dreams about nature were clairvoyant and prophetic. Probably he did not know very much about chemical substances, but he was positive that they could be reduced to one fundamental substance and that their differences were due to quantitative differences in the pattern of their structural elements. Schelling did not think that there was a break in continuity between inorganic and organic matter, between dead and living substances. He thought, or dreamed, that life formed itself anew every day from dead matter. He thought that electricity was as important for the metabolism of a living organism as were chemical processes. He did not believe that organisms were made nor created from outside by the hands of an old-fashioned Creator. He knew that every organism grew from within, shaping itself by tension and polarity, by differentiation and integration, by inner and outer environment, by chemistry, and the forces of 'attraction and repulsion'. He did not believe in old wives' tales nor in the over-simplified explanation of accidental causes. Schelling's dreams of Nature contained many truths; but as he was not a

scientist he was never able to verify them. His dreams did not even become theories.

His immediate influence on the course of contemporary science was not very fortunate. One only has to read the periodicals and official publications of the time to realize how deeply fascinated people were by his ideas, and how often these ideas were used as a substitute for sober observations. Medical men in particular were apt to flounder out of their depth in his *Nature Philosophy*. But it was Lorenz Oken, Schelling's successor in Jena and his foremost disciple, who discovered the human ovum and described the process of fertilization. He advanced the theory that 'all organic beings originate from and consist of vesicles or cells'. Oken became one of the founders of comparative anatomy and created the vertebrate theory of the skull, explaining that it was formed by certain modified segments. This intuitive grasp of comparative anatomy was certainly due to Schelling as well as to Leibnitz and Goethe.

Somnambulism was at that time a great sensation which interested poets, writers, physicians, and scientists. It was almost as if one had to be a sleepwalker (like Prince von Homburg in Heinrich von Kleist's homonymous play) in order to be a genius. People came into contact with Nature through sleepwalking. The only true wisdom was that which originated in the world of dreams. Dreams were without logic. Dreams were irrational. So were the actions of Katchen von Heilbronn and Prince von Homburg. Everything they did was a mistake, but a mistake originating in a state of dream and inspired by the subconscious: and as the dream proved true, the mistake turned out to be a stroke of genius. Schelling did not believe in the over-valuation of rational thought. His philosophy revolted against Kant's submission to rules and analytical methods. And Kleist, who became acquainted with Schelling's mentality through the lectures given by Schubert in Dresden, accepted his romanticism. Prince von Homburg was a symbol of inspired genius when he opposed the Great Elector who stood for the man of action always bound down by rules. Alas, the same Great Elector was dominated by the special concept of the state which Kant, Fichte, Schiller, and Hegel had invented. For these philosophers who believed in the conscious ego, the state represented the Super-I, Kant's transcendental 'I' had already been described as a collective one,



which had nothing to do with an empirical person. But Schiller and Fichte did not even like to be reminded that their 'I' was empirical. They thought that every individual carried within him the pattern of a perfect 'I' which they called the 'States I'. Schiller explained that a person's integrity was proportionate to his success in living up to his 'States I' standard. Those who attained the closest resemblance to the model were filled with the highest ideas, thinking always in terms of science, justice and art, and doing their duty by complying with officially stabilized rules.<sup>1</sup> Science was organized by state-universities, art by Royal Academies, morals and law by the State Church. Schiller called this state 'aesthetic': Fichte's name for it was 'Folk-state'. But Hegel surpassed everything by making the concrete Prussian state in which he lived 'absolute', so that it became the incarnation of God's metaphysical thought. There was no purely private 'I' any more, nobody existed except in so far as he was a citizen participating in the living Super-I of the State. Everyone had to be completely conventional. Thought and behaviour were reduced to a manipulation of concepts; the concepts themselves were no longer created by thinking individuals, but were issued and coined like money by the State. The life of the whole population was ruled by convention. Every spontaneous action and thought was discouraged because it constituted a disturbance. (If it actually infringed the rules it was a crime.) Consequently, everybody behaved as he was expected to do. Instead of coming in contact with reality, people were confronted by formalized masks representing some concept, as, for example: one did not marry because one was in love, but one was in love because one happened to be married. Kleist's Great Elector represented this idea of the State. He planned the battle and issued the orders: his generals had nothing to do but to obey. If they were disobedient and on their own initiative corrected some obvious error, as Prince von Homburg did, they were executed, even if the situation had been saved by their action. Kleist was really indebted to Schelling's insight for the creation of Prince von Homburg. Schelling had already broken away from Hegel, the future Prussian State philosopher, and it was Schelling who found a man like the Great Elector as unnatural and inhuman a figure in real life as he appeared in his dramatized version on the stage. Every

<sup>1</sup> Compare the detrimental ideas of Eduard Spranger

member of the romantic movement must have been repelled by the conceit of a man who mounted a pedestal and identified himself with the State Super Ego to compensate the inner distress which arose from his own shortcomings. They hated, too, the false pathos of Schiller whose stage characters were typical 'States I's', pompous and overloaded with the trappings of virtue. Schelling and some of his friends who attended the first production of 'Wallenstein' in Weimar, went back to Jena afterwards nauseated by what they had seen. The real object of their hostility, of course, was the philistine, the man who relied on cut-and-dried concepts and conventions and, being unable to see with his own eyes, was incapable of forming an independent judgement on any subject. Influenced by Schiller and Hegel all these mediocrities were scrambling into the conventional robes of state dignitaries in order to conceal their private deficiencies and prove their state-sanctioned respectability. Thus any stupid doctor might become a health-councillor; any ignorant teacher a school-councillor; any crooked solicitor (if he was not too young), a councillor of justice. A business-man was called a councillor of commerce; even a head clerk became a chancery-councillor. All these officials spoke in high-pitched voices, like characters created by Schiller; and each of them felt himself as a States-I, whether he walked about in a frock coat or wore the helmet and uniform of the Prussian police.

Hölderlin shared Schelling's dislike of the philistine who believed himself ennobled by an official position. (Hell. II, pp. 282-6.) 'Barbarians of old grown more barbarous still by their industry, their learning, even by their religion. There are artisans, but no human beings; thinkers, priests, but no human beings; masters and servants, old and young people, but no human beings! Is this not like a battlefield where hands and arms and limbs of every kind lie about in shreds, whilst the living blood trickles away into the sand?' What was wrong with these people was that they had forgotten how to be 'natural'; they had been transformed into automata by their industrious application of conceptual doctrines; their education and even their religion had done nothing but uproot them from nature which was their native soil. They had not been allowed to grow as a plant grows. Instead of following their impulses and becoming wise through their own experience, ready-made wisdom had been thrust into

their brains by teachers, who forced upon them a set of abstract rules, opinions and doctrines prefabricated by quite unreliable minds. These ideas, however practical they were, acted as foreign bodies in the spiritual system, and were as cold and mechanical as bureaucratic rules in a prison. They were simply meant to be utilized, and could be handled by anyone like machines, in the same way that a motor car can be driven by a school-girl, or a mathematical formula employed by a clerk who does not understand its meaning. All intellectual activities, music, poetry, painting, could be carried on in this way; but the work so produced would inevitably be without life. It does not matter if dead words are written for dead ears, if conventional pictures are sold for dead eyes, if the whole imposition is practised on the dead system of a dying society. But Schelling and his friends were alive, and they refused to accept anything mechanically fabricated: they did not believe in paper roses. The fact that Klages, Schuler, Bernoulli, Bergson and other of Schelling's modern pupils distrusted 'thinking', only showed that conceptual thought had become unoriginal and divorced from inner experience, and that concepts were merely its mass-produced instruments. Schelling saw that original insight could only emanate from the subconscious as a manifestation of nature itself in its productive role. Concepts were dead thoughts, crystallizations of defunct mental activity devoid of creative force. Concepts could only be formulated after intuition and observation had done their work. Living thoughts could not be produced to order, by official decrees, but had to be drawn up from the deep sea of universal identity in which the thinker submerged himself by hypnosis.

Schelling explains in his *Transcendental Philosophy* that every truth consists of a congruency of subject and object. If this is accepted, then, Schelling continues, the question arises how the thoughts of the subject could agree with the things, and how the things could agree with and depend on the thoughts of the subject ('wie die Vorstellungen sich nach den Gegenständen and die Gegenstände nach den Vorstellungen richtend gedacht werden können'). This can only come about—says Schelling—when there is a pre-established harmony between subject and object. And this harmony is able to exist because the active principle which produces the world of objects is identical with our innermost essence. This essence, the principle that shapes ourselves



as well as the world of objects, Schelling calls 'volition'. Here he agrees with Schopenhauer who developed very similar ideas. To Schopenhauer 'things in themselves' (Dinge an sich) could not be understood in their metaphysical essence unless the inquirer looked into the depth of his own soul. ('Nach innen führt der geheimnisvolle Weg' was Novalis' formulation). And it was 'volition' (Wille) as opposed to 'thinking' which constituted the essence of subjects and objects. This volition was irrational. Fichte did not mean volition by 'will power' of the mind, when he coined the epigram 'durch Willenskraft und Wissenschaft' ('through will power and science'), explaining that every thought was based on will power because it involved a mental effort, a moral or ethical impulse. He meant that thought resulted from overcoming mental inertia and passivity. However, volition ('Wollen') as it was understood by Schelling and Schopenhauer, was not an effort enforced upon the conscious will, but the drive of nature herself. Nature was neither passive nor indolent, having as her source 'genesis', 'the eternal process of becoming' (ewiges Werden), a creative activity which continually renewed itself with inexhaustible productivity. This principle was not to be apprehended as mind but as soul; the 'soul of the world' as Schelling phrased it. It was a female intuitive principle rather than an intellectual male one. It was a maternal soul incorporating the idea of love.

Possibly Mesmer's animal magnetism had influenced Schelling's belief in the productive world soul. This magnetism of Mesmer's (the source of hypnosis) was conceived as a kind of ubiquitous fluid which permeated everything in the universe.

Mesmer believed that a similar emanation radiated from man, and that it could be used by his will to shape and influence the minds and bodies of others. This principle was very similar to that of the 'father æther' in which Hölderlin believed, a principle of pantheism and a symbol of ultimate unity. Novalis had been influenced by similar ideas, and found in Mesmerism an indication of a general intimate inter-connection of all things with each other throughout creation. If such an emanation or radial activity existed as a formative force and principle of identity, then many things became understandable. Schopenhauer and Schelling did accept, in fact, the possibility of certain phenomena, such as clairvoyance and telepathy. If one general fluid permeated the

universe, a clairvoyant could make contact with anything; especially if he were able to adjust himself to the vibrations of the fluid to such a degree that he actually identified himself with an object.

A similar line of thought had already been prepared by Paracelsus who had founded the 'sympathetic system' of medicine, according to which the stars and other magnet-like bodies shaped and influenced mankind and all created things by means of a subtle and all-pervasive emanation.

What Paracelsus thought of as emanations, became 'Wollung' for Schelling and Schopenhauer. Volition was production and genesis; it became 'ambivalent', and a thing of polar duplicity. Volition was plus and minus, was constructive as well as destructive, life and death in one, in itself both evil and good. It is this doctrine of the basic ambivalence of our existence which connects Schelling with his predecessor Jacob Böhme and to the pessimism of Schopenhauer and Bahnsen. Bahnsen's view was that every manifestation of nature presented a schism which could only become united in the healthy brain of a fully developed individual. When the brain deteriorates, as in disease or old age, man's natural ambivalence becomes only too apparent. This fact is also the backbone of Jung's theory that the metaphysical forces which shape our fate (our mothers) are both good and evil, hostile as well as friendly.

Schelling himself never comments upon the significance of the polar structure of our being. It is evident that whatever is in the process of becoming static must find an equilibrium in itself. And an equilibrium cannot be achieved without a subdivision of the weight of original force: so that there is a scalebeam and a lever of balance arising out of a subdivision of original forces and tendencies into two opposite polar directions. Every tree must divide its trunk so that one branch counterbalances the weight of another until the whole weight of its system acquires equilibrium and hangs suspended in the air. The more unbalanced the origin, the greater must be the striving in nature for an ever higher degree of inner balance. Because there is a fundamental disunity within every soul, there must also be a strong tendency to harmonize the conflict. As a tree subdivides its branches again and again, so every kind of organism becomes more and more differentiated by division and subdivision.

The greater the number of channels into which the subdivided forces are guided, the more harmonious the form and fate of a living organism becomes in itself. Wherever conflict exists there is also to be found the germ of possible higher development and transmutation into more complex patterns. Man develops into the unit of a strongly differentiated organism, and through his consciousness he achieves the miracle of integration. Be it admitted: Nature is always striving to acquire a higher and higher degree of elaborate structure, equilibrium, beauty, power, and perfection. The development of the mind runs parallel with the differentiation of the body. From those unconscious tensions which have affinity with chemical elements, from plants and animals and the conscious perceptions of cats, dogs and apes, right up to the mind of a human being endowed with the faculty of original and abstract thought, there is one continuous striving of nature towards consciousness. That which was unconscious in plants and animals becomes subconscious and preconscious in children and somnambulists: until it develops into the bright light of lucidity ennobling the grown-up mind of a human being. Nature becomes man and spirit, and develops into the mental power of creative man; then achieving conceptual thought and original observation and what Leibnitz called 'exact imagination'; and thus finally transforming itself into genius. But it is only through the stimulus of the original conflict that nature has been impelled to extend its evolution right up to this most complex manifestation of the mind. Nature needs beauty because it cannot exist without equilibrium; and all beauty is based on symmetry which is the outcome of nature's ambivalence and inner discord; symmetry being essential both to equilibrium and to beauty.

We can understand, therefore, Schelling's preoccupation with the function of art. His theories apply to the artistic achievements of such men as Hölderlin, and in classical times, Aeschylus, Homer and Pindar. In the realm of architecture there is the example of the gothic cathedrals, leading on to Mathias Grünwald and the mediæval masterpieces of sculptured wood.

Not every type of music bears out Schelling's theory, though much of Mozart's work certainly does, as well as the fugues of Bach with their synthesis of form and expression, and Beethoven's late quartets. Painting must be approached more cautiously. Overbeck and Friederich, the painters of Schelling's orphic



landscape, were essentially sensitive. Neither of them, however, could be compared with *Rénoir* or *Cézanne*, for neither possessed the degree of creative power necessary to confirm art as the sacred prerogative of the highest mental faculties.

In a real work of art nature herself revealed the productive act of her genesis. Nature revealed herself in the artistic process of moulding and creating a form, and such a form was therefore a life. Her outer shape was visible like a body, but it could also be felt and experienced from within. One could hear a piece of music and analyse its acoustic outline in a mechanical way. But a melody was more than its form: one could sing it and identify oneself with its life: one could feel its sorrow and pain. If the singing was spontaneous, the melody was created anew by the singer who experienced its rhythms, intervals and discords in the same way as the composer had done. The melody meant something not to be expressed in words; it did not mean 'Vorstellung', the perception of fictional ideas, but it meant 'Wille', emotion, tension. The function of art was to express feelings, analogous to the expression of a face and its 'Mienenspiel' (the emotional play of its muscles).

Emotion was not conveyed by allegorical means. Real art was symbolic, demonstrating the metaphysical fact that all things were identical with each other. The term 'symbol' had a specified meaning for Schelling. It was derived from 'symballein'—throwing or falling together. In a work of art, the real and the ideal, the finite and the infinite, assumed their proper identity by 'falling together'. The real was the outer surface of its artistic manifestation, while the ideal and the infinite belonged to an emotional experience which was identical with the mood and moment of its creation. To Schelling, as to Novalis and Hölderlin, the significance of a poem was not to be found in clouds, air and trees, but in the musical sound of its vowels. As these expressed gaiety, force or sorrow, so the clouds, air and trees became invested with the emotional quality of their vowel-sounds. Rimbaud has given special attention to this characteristic of poetry; but his vowels, E, I, U, would never have attained significance had they not been part of a magic system of harmony carried upon the waves of the 'orphic fluid', that magnetic power which appeared to Schelling as the very breath of God. The language of poetry was as moving to him as the creative logos:

was, indeed this *logos* itself. There was no need to render it in verse or restrict it by arbitrary meters. Language needed only to be spoken from the depth of its subconscious origin and understood in its weight, sound and sorrow. The unique beauty of this poetic language was to be found in its own equilibrium, its breath, rhythm and pace. It could not be forced into an artificial shape because it created its own design in its grammar and meaning, in its images, in the construction of its sentences, in its sounds. Rhythmical values could no more be replaced by meters than the language of poetry could be made more 'original' by a distortion of its natural form or the addition of forced rhymes or stylistic experiments. Poetry and dream-symbolism cannot be represented by the use of concepts, universals and abstractions belonging to the dead and non-sensual sphere of consciousness. To substitute pictorial snapshot-imagery for vision is an impossibility. A poem must be a dream out of metaphysical sleep to be accepted as art in Schelling's sense of the word. It must penetrate beyond normal perception; it must comprehend the wisdom of woods and primeval jungles. It must reveal the significance of our fate and the shaping forces which, because they contain the germs of both good and evil, lie hidden in unconscious volition (*Wollungen*). Poetry must disclose its origin. It must stand as a symbol: it must show us the tears and laughter of God confronting His own being, all His 'Zorn-Feuer' (wrath-fire) as well as His 'Liebesfeuer' (love-fire); creation as well as destruction. God must be depicted as nature, and the picture must be precise. It must be finite, while simultaneously describing the infinite: finite and infinite 'falling together' (*symballein*). God as equivalent to creation can only be represented by a living symbol; not by an allegory arising from some lifeless concept. His presence must really be felt, weeping and laughing and speaking as a phrase of Beethoven's string music does, so that it is perceived more as laughter and sorrow than as music. Indeed much of the greatest European poetry has been influenced by this wisdom of Schelling's. The best of Coleridge and Keats, some of Shelley's magical and lovely songs (e.g. 'The Spirit of the Night') is pure Schelling in form, sound, imagery and idea. Beaudelaire achieved more than Schelling could have dreamt of. Not only the beautiful expressiveness of his sounds and his belief in symbols derives from Schelling, but also his insight into the tragic aspect of nature.

Beaudelaire's flowers are the 'fleurs du mal', in the same way that destruction is one aspect of God. Much of Mallarmé's obscurity readily becomes clear if sound, image and meaning are traced back to the unconscious.

Judged by the same standard of value the poetry of Valéry, Stephan George, and Rilke seems to be symbolistic instead of symbolic. Their flowers are not alive: their symbols do not live and blossom as plants do, being only dead words on paper, incapable of love, laughter or tears: in fact, not symbols at all. These poets do not open a channel into the universal subconscious; their artificial and highly intellectualized works could never have taken shape in a dream. Later on other artists appeared who were initiates of the somnambulistic mystery through which lies the path to the hidden secrets of nature. Nature's self was revealed by such painters as Klee, whose work was dream-like without being too private. Nature's own sorrows were projected into the tortured radiance of abstract painting. In a similar way, writers like Trakl and Kafka possessed the power of communicating unconceptual wisdom in a dream-form. Their dreams were not falsified; the images and symbols which they used were artistically true and not stereotyped concepts such as less talented authors employ. Schelling's art was not realism; at least, not realism as seen by the philistine: but neither was it an idealized dream-art. The miracle of art was only achieved when reality had passed through the modification of the artist's own inward dream. The artist had to dream the reality before he could translate it into a genuine art form. In other words, he had to use real things as symbols of emotional tensions.

One thing in Schelling's art philosophy is of special interest. The process of shaping seems to be more valuable to him than its material realization. There is more than a parallel between spirit and body. The real is not only the outward form of the ideal, but the result of its activity: passive reality is actually created by the action of the active ideal or spiritual element. The real is finite in all its manifestations; but the ideal is infinite. The real is a special form of development: but the ideal is a general principle capable of manifesting itself indefinitely in further creations. What Schelling calls the real, is, in fact, much less than the ideal. The shaping principle is the mother and 'natura naturans'. But its realization is what Master Ekkehard called 'die genaturte Natur'



and John Scotus before him 'natura naturata'. The reality of concrete material things can be grasped conceptually by comparing them to one another and by grouping and classifying them according to universal principles their genesis can not!

Some of Schelling's theosophical ideas have been revived recently by the new fashion in mysticism and occultism: but it is Bergson who is mainly responsible for introducing him to educated readers. His 'elan vital' and his 'evolution créatrice', although ridiculed by conventional thinkers and scientists, have proved of outstanding importance in their influence upon modern thought.

Schelling believed in man's freedom as a creative being, but only in so far as the trend of his creativeness coincided with the evolutionary drive of the universe. He did not make use of the old-fashioned acceptance of time and space as attributes of thought and matter which Descartes had sponsored with his false doctrine of the two substances, thought and extension. For Schelling, space and matter were simply expressions of the genesis proceeding in time.

Many serious thinkers have concentrated on this organic process of inner experience. Schopenhauer, who called it 'will' or 'desire'; Bahnson, who described it as the schizoid principle of despair; Ed. V. Hartmann, who called it 'the unconscious'; Adler and the great Nietzsche, both of whom gave it the title of 'ambition'; Freud, the most important of them all, who called it 'libido' and based his new theory of psychology upon it.

To laugh at Schelling, or simply to call him a bore, is to dispose of him much too lightly, since he became, rather regrettably, the father of all emotional tendencies in modern art and philosophy. Whether or not his doctrine becomes an instrument of destruction depends on how far emotional intuitive impulses are checked by conceptual thinking, as well as on the question of whether unconscious drives are chaotic (as Schopenhauer thought), or constructive, organized functions like the growth of a plant. There can be no doubt that both constructive and destructive tendencies are present in every system: but there is one decisive point, underlined by Schelling, which indicates exactly where modern thought diverges from the old-fashioned philosophies. This point is the relative importance of 'being' and 'thinking'. Descartes believed in his own existence only because of his

capacity to think. Schelling experienced his being first. ('I am, therefore, I think,' as opposed to, 'I think, therefore I am.')

The epistemology created by Husserl and the modern phenomenologists not only defined Schelling's concept of intuition, but cleared the way for the new 'Existential-Philosophie' which, under the guidance of Martin Heidegger, has exerted the strongest influence on the creative activities of our time. The drive of the human subconscious, variously described as 'desire' and 'despair', 'angst' and 'libido', 'creative evolution', or 'durée vécue', appeared to Heidegger as a tension and an awareness which he calls 'sorrow'.

'Sorrow' denotes more than 'angst', being confined neither to concrete dangers nor to problems of the outer environment. 'Sorrow' is for Heidegger the very heart of our being, as it is concerned with the shape and fate of the being itself. To him it appears as the mood and dynamo of creation, an urge to continuous growth, an organic process of perpetual development, without limit or interruption.

One wonders whether it is possible to write a criticism of Schelling which would make sense to modern readers. Scientists will realize that neither his subject nor his methods have anything in common with mathematics or empirical facts. But nobody argues that a fairy tale or a dream does not make sense because it disregards rules and conditions of space, time and reality. One cannot laugh at fairy tales unless one has not developed beyond the mental age of a child who no longer believes in the tale of the stork. Myths, dreams and music are symbols describing the structure of the unconscious. Schelling's philosophy has a similar function. But his symbols are abstract expressions which have been formulated in much the same way by great metaphysical poets of different nations. One is reminded of the Greek orphism and of Diels 'Fragmente der Vorsokratiker' . . . and one could express Schelling's belief in the metaphysical Oneness which underlies all deceptive movements and qualities of every-day reality, by translating literally from the Greek: 'Unimpressed by the beliefs of human beings, Xenophanes (one might equally well say, Schelling) dreamed his vision of a godhead homogeneous in every respect, unmoved, beyond the reach of all suffering, more spiritual than spirit'. (Timon, fr. 60 Diels—21 A 53.)

ELIZABETH BOWEN

## IVY GRIPPED THE STEPS

IVY gripped and sucked at the flight of steps, down which with such a deceptive wildness it seemed to be flowing like a cascade. Ivy matted the door at the top and amassed in bushes above and below the porch. More, it has covered, or one might feel consumed, one entire half of the high double-fronted house, from the basement up to a spiked gable: it had attained about half-way up to the girth and more than the density of a tree, and was sagging outward under its own weight. One was left to guess at the size and the number of windows hidden by looking at those in the other side. But these, though in sight, had been made effectively sightless: sheets of some dark composition that looked like metal were sealed closely into their frames. The house, not old, was of dull red brick with stone trimmings.

To crown all, the ivy was now in fruit, clustered over with fleshy pale green berries. There was something brutal about its fecundity. It was hard to credit that such a harvest could have been nourished only on brick and stone. Had not reason insisted that the lost windows must, like their fellows, have been made fast, so that the suckers for all their seeking voracity could not enter, one could have convinced oneself that the ivy must be feeding on something inside the house.

The process of strangulation could be felt: one wondered how many more years of war would be necessary for this to complete itself. And, the conventionality of the house, the remains, at least, of ordering its surroundings made what was happening more and more an anomaly. Mrs. Nicholson's house had always enjoyed distinction—that of being detached, while its neighbours though equally 'good', had been erected in couples or even in blocks of four; that of being the last in the avenue; that of having on one hand as neighbour the theatre, to whose façade its front was at right angles. The theatre, set back behind shallow semi-circular gardens, at once crowned and terminated the avenue, which ran from it to the Promenade overhanging the sea. And



the house, apart from the prestige of standing just where it stood, had the air of reserving something quite of its own. It was thus perhaps just, or not unfitting, that it should have been singled out for this gothic fate.

This was, or had been, one of the best residential avenues in Southstone, into which private hotels intruded only with the most breathless, costly discretion: if it was not that now it was nothing else, for there was nothing else for it to be. Lines of chestnut trees had been planted along the pavements, along the railed strip of lawn that divided the avenue down the centre—now, the railings were, with all other ironwork, gone; and where the lawn was very long, rusty grass grew up into the tangles of rusty barbed wire. On to this, as on to the concrete pyramids—which, in the course of four years of waiting to be pushed out to obstruct the invader, had sunk some inches into the soil—the chestnuts were now dropping their leaves.

The decline dated from the exodus of the summer of 1940, when Southstone had been declared to be in the front line. The houses at the sea end of the avenue had, like those on the Promenade, been requisitioned; but some of those at the theatre end stayed empty. Here and there portions of porches or balustrades had fallen into front gardens, crushing their overgrowth; but there were no complete ruins; no bomb or shell had arrived immediately here, and effects of blast, though common to all of Southstone, were less evident than desuetude and decay. It was now the September of 1944; and, for some reason, the turn of the tide of war, the accumulation of the Invasion victories, gave Southstone its final air of defeat. The withdrawal of most of the soldiers, during the summer, had drained off adventitious vitality. The A.A. batteries, this month, were on the move to another part of the coast. And, within the very last few days, the silencing of the guns across the Channel had ended the tentative love affair with death: Southstone's life, no longer kept to at least a pitch by shelling warnings, now had nothing but an etiolated slowness. In the shuttered shopping streets, along the Promenade, in the intersecting avenues, squares and crescents, vacuum mounted up. The lifting of the ban on the area had, so far, brought few visitors in.

This afternoon, for minutes together, not a soul, not even a soldier crossed the avenue: Gavin Doddington stood to regard

the ivy in what was, virtually, solitude. The sky being clouded, though not dark, a timeless flat light fell on to everything. Outside the theatre a very few soldiers stood grouped about; some moodily, some in no more than apathy. The theatre gardens had been cemented over to make a lorry park; and the engine of one of the lorries was being run.

Mrs. Nicholson could not be blamed for the ivy: *her* absence from Southstone was of long standing, for she had died in 1912—two years before the outbreak of what Gavin still thought of as Admiral Concannon's war. After her death, the house had been put up for auction by her executors: since then, it might well have changed hands two or three times. Probably few of the residents dislodged in 1940 had so much as heard Mrs. Nicholson's name. In its condition, today, the house was a paradox: having been closed and sealed up with extreme care, it had been abandoned in a manner no less extreme. It had been nobody's business to check the ivy. Nor, apparently, has there been anybody to authorize a patriotic sacrifice of the railings—Gavin Doddington, prodding between the strands of ivy, confirmed his impression that that iron lacework still topped the parapet of the front garden. He could pursue with his finger, though not see, the pattern that with other details of the house, outside and in, had long ago been branded into his memory. Looking up at the windows on the exposed half he saw, still in position along the sills, miniature reproductions of this pattern, for the support of window boxes. Those, which were gone, had been flowery in her day.

The assumption was that, as lately as 1940, Mrs. Nicholson's house *had* belonged to someone, but that it belonged to nobody now. The late owner's death in some other part of England must have given effect to a will not brought up to date, by which the property passed to an heir who could not be found—to somebody not heard of since Singapore fell or not yet reported anything more than 'missing' after a raid on London or a battle abroad. Legal hold-ups dotted the world-wide mess. . . . So reasoning, Gavin Doddington gave rein to what had been his infant and was now his infantile passion for explanation. But also he attached himself to the story as to something that had nothing to do with him; and did so with the intensity of a person who must think lest he should begin to feel.

His passion for explanation had been, when he knew Mrs. Nicholson, raised by her power of silently baulking it into the principal reason for suffering. It had been among the stigmata of his extreme youth—he had been eight when he met her, ten when she died. He had not been back to Southstone since his last stay with her.

Now, the lifting of the official ban on the area had had the effect of bringing him straight back—why? When what one has refused is put out of reach, when what one has avoided becomes forbidden, some lessening of the inhibition may well occur. The ban had so acted on his reluctance that, when the one was removed, the other came away with it—as a scab, adhering, comes off with a wad of lint. The transmutation, due to the fall of France, of his ‘I cannot go back to Southstone’ into ‘One cannot go there’ must have been salutary, or, at least, exteriorizing. It so happened that when the ban came off he had been due for a few days’ leave from the Ministry. He had at once booked a room at one of the few hotels that remained at the visitor’s disposition.

Arriving at Southstone yesterday evening, he had confined his stroll in the hazy marine dusk to the cracked, vacant and wire-looped Promenade—from which he returned with little more than the wish that he had, after all, brought somebody down here with him. Amorist since his teens, he had not often set off on a holiday unaccompanied. The idea of this as a pilgrimage revolted him: he remained in the bar till it closed. This morning he had no more than stalked the house, approaching it in wavering circles closing through the vaguer Southstone areas of association. He had fixed for the actual confrontation that hour, deadline for feeling, immediately after lunch.

The story originated in a friendship between two young girls in their Dresden finishing year. Edith and Lilian had kept in touch throughout later lives that ran very widely apart—their letters, regularly exchanged, were perhaps more confidential than their infrequent meetings. Edith had married a country gentleman, Lilian a business man. Jimmie Nicholson had bought the Southstone house for his wife in 1907, not long before his death, which had been the result of a stroke. He had been her senior by about fifteen years: their one child, a daughter, had died at birth.

Edith Doddington, who had never been quite at ease on the subject of Lilian's marriage, came to stay more often now her friend was a widow, but still could not come as often as both would have liked. Edith's own married life was one of contrivance and of anxiety. After money, the most pressing of Edith's worries centred round the health of her second son: Gavin had been from birth a delicate little boy. The damp of his native county, inland and low-lying, did not suit him: there was the constant question of change of air—till his health stabilized, he could not go away to school. It was natural that Lilian, upon discovering this, should write inviting Gavin to stay at Southstone—ideally, of course, let his mother bring him; but if Edith could not be free, let him come alone. Mrs. Nicholson hoped he and she, who had not yet met, would not, or would not for long, be shy of each other. Her maid Rockham was, at any rate, good with children.

Gavin had heard of Southstone as the scene of his mother's only exotic pleasure. The maid Rockham was sent to London to meet him: the two concluded their journey with the absurdly short drive, in an open victoria, from the station to Mrs. Nicholson's house. It was early in what was a blazing June; the awnings over the windows rippled, the marguerites in the window boxes undulated, in a hot breeze coming down the avenue from the sea. From the awnings the rooms inside took a tense bright dusk. In the sea-blue drawing-room, up whose walls reared mirrors framed in ivory brackets, Gavin was left to await Mrs. Nicholson. He had time to marvel at the variety of the bric-a-brac crowding brackets and tables, the multitude of cut crystal vases, the earliness of the purple and white sweet pea—at the Doddingtons' sweet peas did not flower before July. Mrs. Nicholson then entered: to his surprise she did not kiss him.

Instead, she stood looking down at him—she was tall—with a glittering charming air of uncertainty. Her head bent a little lower, during consideration not so much of Gavin as of the moment. Her coiffure was like spun sugar: that its crisp upward waves should seem to have been splashed with silvery powder added, only, marquise-like glowing youth to her face.

The summery light-like fullness of her dress was accentuated by the taut belt with coral-inlaid clasp: from that small start the



skirts flowed down to dissipate and spread where they touched the floor. Tentatively she extended her right hand, which he, without again raising his eyes, shook. 'Well . . . Gavin,' she said, 'I hope you had a good journey? I am so very glad you could come.'

He said: 'And my mother sends you her love'.

'Does she?' Sitting down, sinking an elbow into the sofa cushions, she added: 'How is Edith—how is your mother?'

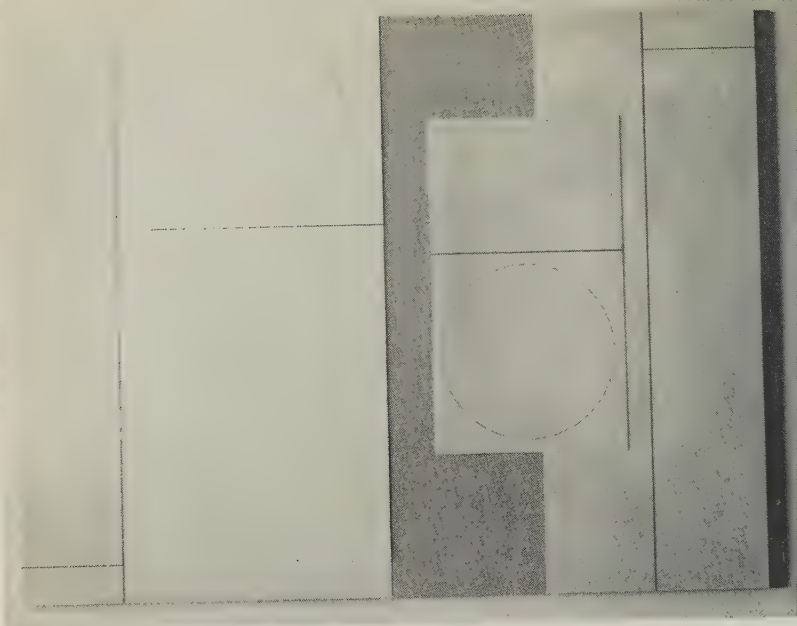
'Oh, she is very well.'

She vaguely glanced round her drawing-room, as though seeing it from his angle, and, therefore, herself seeing it for the first time. The alternatives it offered could be distracting: she soon asked him her first intimate question—'Where do you think you would like to sit?'

Not that afternoon, nor, indeed, until some way on into this first visit did Gavin distinguish at all sharply between Mrs. Nicholson and her life. Not till the knife of love gained sufficient edge could he cut out her figure from its surroundings. Southstone was, for the poor landowner's son, the first glimpse of the enchanted existence of the *rentier*. Everything was effortless; and, to him, consequently, seemed stamped with style. This society gained by smallness: it could be comprehended. People here, the company that she kept, commanded everything they desired, were charged with nothing they did not. The expenditure of their incomes—expenditure calculated so long ago and so nicely that it could now seem artless—occupied them. What there was to show for it showed at every turn; though at no turn too much, for it was not too much. Such light, lofty, smooth-running houses were to be found, quite likely, in no capital city. A word to the livery stables brought an imposing carriage to any door: in the afternoons one drove, in a little party, to reflect on a Roman ruin or to admire a village church. In the Promenade's glare, at the end of the shaded avenue, parasols passed and repassed in a rhythm of leisure. Just inland were the attentive shops. There were meetings for good causes in cool drawing-rooms, afternoon concerts in the hotel ball-rooms; and there was always the theatre, where applause continued long after Gavin had gone to bed. Best of all, there were no poor to be seen.

The plan of this part of Southstone (a plateau backed by the downs and overhanging the sea) was masterful. Its architecture

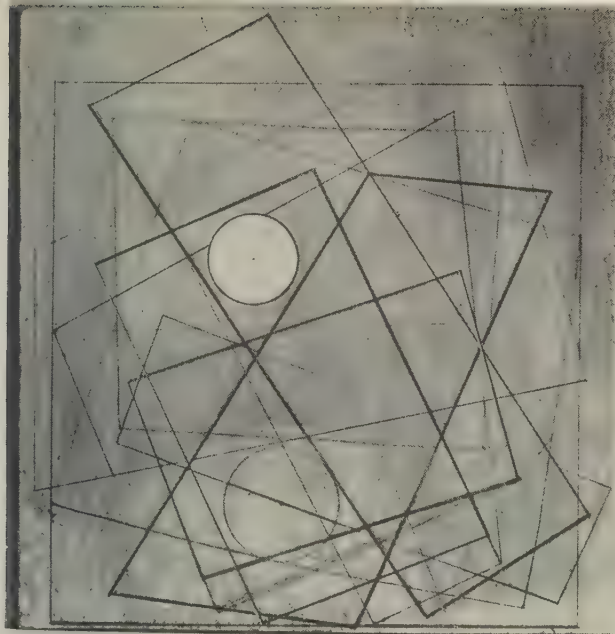




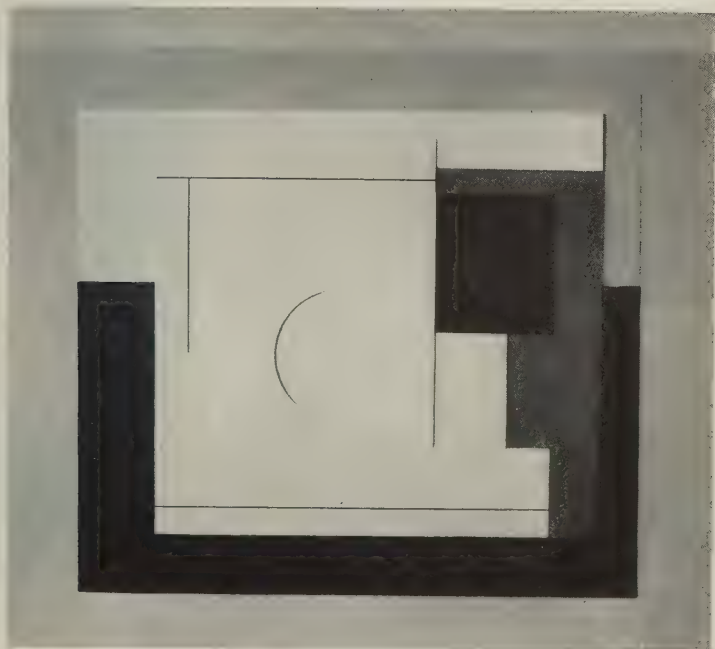
Painted relief 1943-44



St. Ives 1943-45



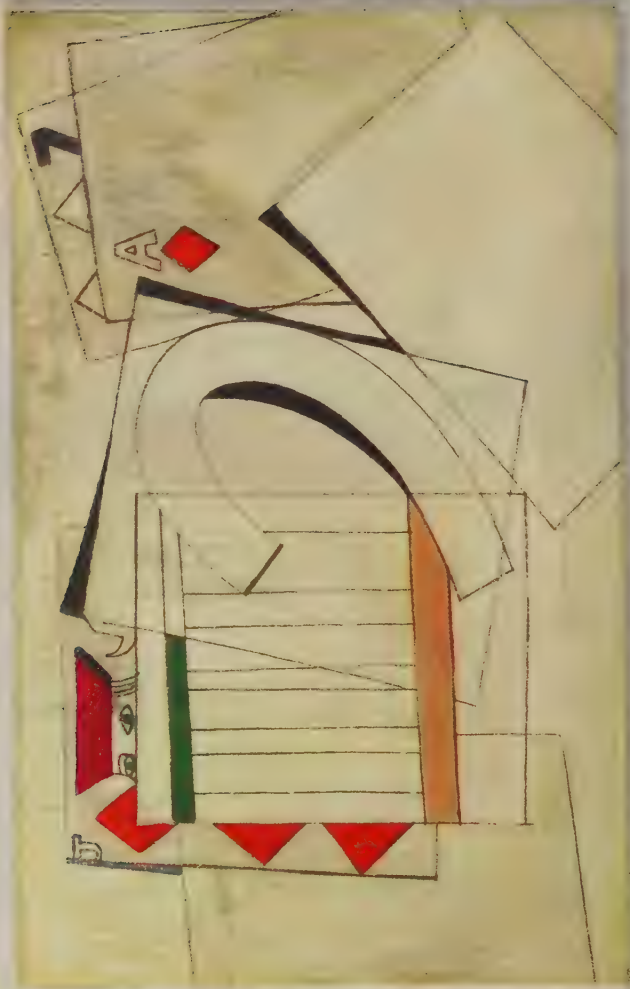
Painting 1945



Painted relief 1944-45

*Collection, Margaret Gardiner*





was ostentatious, fiddling, bulky and mixed. Gavin was happy enough to be at an age to admire the one, to be unaware of the other—he was elated, rather than not, by this exhibition of gim-crack size; and bows, bays, balustrades, glazed-in balconies and French-type mansardes not slowly took up their parts in the fairy tale. As strongly was he impressed by the strong raying out, from such points as station and theatre, of avenues; each of which crossed obliquely, just less wide residential roads. Lavishness appeared in the public flowers, the municipal seats with their sofa-like curving backs, the flagpoles, cliff grottoes, perspectives of lawn. There was a climate here that change from season to season, the roughest Channel gale blowing, could not disturb. This town without function fascinated him—outside it, down to the port or into the fishing quarter, ‘old Southstone’, he did not attempt to stray. Such tameness might have been found odd in a little boy: Mrs. Nicholson never thought of it twice.

Gavin’s estimation of Southstone—as he understood much later—coincided with that of a dead man. When Jimmie Nicholson bought the house for his wife here, Southstone was the high dream of his particular world. It was as Lilian’s husband he made the choice: alone, he might not have felt capable of this polished leisure. His death left it uncertain whether, even as Lilian’s husband, he could have made the grade. The golf course had been his object: failing that he was not, perhaps, so badly placed in the cemetery, which was also outside the town. For, for Southstone, dividends kept their mystic origin: they were as punctual as Divine grace, as unmentioned as children still in wombs. Thick-set Jimmie, with his pursuant reek of the City, could have been a distasteful reminder of money’s source.

Gavin, like his dead host, beheld Southstone with all the ardour of an outsider. His own family had a touch of the brutishness that comes from any dependence upon land. Mr. and Mrs. Doddington were constantly in wet clothes, constantly fatigued, constantly depressed. Nothing new appeared in the squire’s home; and what was old had acquired a sort of fog from being ignored. An austere, religious idea of their own standing not so much inspired as preyed upon Gavin’s parents. Caps touched to them in the village could not console them for the letters they got from their bank. Money for them was like a spring in a marsh, feebly thrusting its way up to be absorbed again: any profit forced from the home

farm, any rents received for outlying lands, went back again into upkeep, rates, gates, hedging, draining, repairs to cottages and renewal of stock. There was nothing, no nothing ever, to show. In the society round them they played no part to which their position did not compel them: they were poor gentry, in fact, at a period when poverty could not be laughed away. Their lot was less enviable than that of any of their employees or tenants, whose faces, naked in their dejection, and voices pitched to complaints they could at least utter, had disconcerted Gavin since babyhood, at the Hall door. Had the Doddingtons been told that their kind would die out, they would have expressed little more than surprise that such complicated troubles could end so simply.

Always towards the end of a stay at Southstone Gavin's senses began to be haunted by the anticipation of going back. So much so that to tread the heat-softened asphalt was to feel once more the suck of a sticky lane. *Here*, day and night he breathed with ease that was still a subconscious joy: the thought of the Midlands made his lungs contract and deaden—such was the old cold air, sequestered by musty baize doors, of the corridors all the way to his room at home.

His room *here* was on the second floor, in front, looking on to the avenue. It had a frieze of violets knotted along a ribbon: as dusk deepened, these turned gradually black. Later, a lamp from the avenue cast a tree's shifting shadow on to the ceiling above his bed; and the same light pierced the Swiss skirts of the dressing-table. Mrs. Nicholson, on the first occasion when she came as far as his door to say good-night, deprecated the 'silliness' of this little room. Rockham, it seemed, had thought it suitable for his age—she, Rockham, had her quarters on the same floor—Mrs. Nicholson, though she did not say so, seemed to feel it to be unsuitable for his sex. 'Because I don't suppose,' she said, 'that you really ever *are* lonely in the night?'

Propped upright against his pillows, gripping his glass of milk, he replied: 'I am never frightened'.

'But, lonely—what makes you lonely, then?'

'I don't know. I suppose, thoughts.'

'Oh, but why,' she said, 'don't you like them?'

'When I am here the night seems a sort of waste, and I don't like to think what a waste it is.'

Mrs. Nicholson, who was on her way out to dinner, paused in the act of looping a gauze scarf over her hair and once again round her throat. 'Only tell me,' she said, 'that you're not more lonely, Gavin, because I am going out? Up here, you don't know if I am in the house or not.'

'I do know.'

'Perhaps,' she suggested humbly, 'you'll go to sleep? They all say it is right for you, going to bed so early, but I wish it did not make days so short—I must go.'

'The carriage hasn't come round yet.'

'No, it won't; it hasn't been ordered. It is so lovely this evening, I thought I would like to walk.' She spoke, though, as though the project were spoiled for her: she could not help seeing, as much as he did, the unkindness of leaving him with this picture. She came, even, further into the room to adjust her scarf at his mirror, for it was not yet dark. 'Just once, one evening perhaps, you could stay up late. Do you think it would matter? I'll ask Rockham.'

Rockham remained the arbiter: it was she who was left to exercise anything so nearly harsh as authority. In, even, the affairs of her own house Mrs. Nicholson was not heard giving an order: what could not be thought to be conjured into existence must be part of the clockwork wound up at the start by Jimmie and showing no sign of beginning to run down yet. The dishes that came to table seemed to surprise her as much, and as pleasingly, as they did Gavin. Yet the effect she gave was not of idleness but of preoccupation: what she did with her days Gavin did not ask himself—when he did ask himself, later, it was too late. They continued to take her colour—those days she did nothing with.

It was Rockham who worked out the daily programme, devised to keep the little boy out of Madam's way. 'Because Madam,' she said, 'is not accustomed to children.' It was by Rockham that, every morning, he was taken down to play by the sea: the beach, undulations of orange shingle, was fine-combed with breakwaters, against one of which sat Rockham, reading a magazine. Now and then she would look up, now and then she would call. These relegations to Rockham sent Gavin to angry extremes of infantilism: he tried to drape seaweed streamers around her hat; he plagued to have pebbles taken out of his shoe. There was a literal feeling of degradation about this descent from the plateau



to the cliff's foot. From close up, the sea, with its heaving mackerel vacancy, bored him—most of the time he stood with his back to it, shading his eyes and staring up at the heights. From right down here, though Southstone could not be seen—any more than objects set back on a high shelf can be seen by somebody standing immediately underneath it—its illusion, its magical artificiality, was to be savoured as from nowhere else. Tiny, the flags of the Promenade's edge, the figures leaning along the railings, stood out against a dazzle of sky. And he never looked up at these looking down without an interrupted heartbeat—might she not be among them?

The rule was that they, Rockham and Gavin, walked zigzag down by the cliff path, but travelled up in the lift. But one day fate made Rockham forget her purse. They had therefore to undertake the ascent. The path's artful gradients, hand-railed, were broken by flights of steps and by niched seats, upon every one of which Rockham plumped herself down to regain breath. The heat of midday, the glare from the flowered cliff beat up Gavin into a sort of fever. As though a dropped plummet had struck him between the eyes he looked up, to see Mrs. Nicholson's face above him against the blue. The face, its colour rendered transparent by the transparent silk of a parasol, was inclined forward: he had the experience of seeing straight up into eyes that did not see him. Her look was pitched into space: she was not only not seeing him, she was seeing nothing. She was listening, but not attending, while someone talked.

Gavin, gripping the handrail, bracing his spine against it, leaned out backwards over the handrail into the void, in the hopes of intercepting her line of view. But in vain. He tore off clumps of sea pinks and cast the too-light flowers outwards into the air, but her pupils never once flickered down. Despair, the idea that his doom must be never, never to reach her, not only now but ever, gripped him and gripped his limbs as he took the rest of the path—the two more bends and few more steps to the top. He clawed his way up the rail, which shook in its socket.

The path, when it landed Gavin on to the Promenade, did so some yards from where Mrs. Nicholson and her companion stood. Her companion was Admiral Concannon. 'Hello, hello,' said the Admiral, stepping back to see clear of the parasol. 'Where have *you* sprung from?'

'Oh, but Gavin,' exclaimed Mrs. Nicholson, also turning, 'why not come up in the lift? I thought you liked it.'

'Lift?' said the Admiral. 'Lift, at his age? What, has the boy got a dicky heart?'

'No, indeed!' she said, and looked at Gavin so proudly that he became the image of health and strength.

'In that case,' said the Admiral, 'do him good.' There was something, in the main, not unflattering about this co-equal masculine brusqueness. Mrs. Nicholson, looking over the railings, perceived the labouring top of her maid's hat; 'It's poor Rockham,' she said, 'that I am thinking about; she hasn't got a heart but she has attacks.—How hazy it is,' she said, indicating the horizon with a gloved hand. 'It seems to be days since we saw France. I don't believe Gavin believes it is really there.'

'It is there all right,' said the Admiral, frowning slightly.

'Why, Rockham,' she interposed, 'you look hot. Whatever made you walk up on a day like this?'

'Well, I cannot fly, can I, Madam; and I overlooked my purse.'

'Admiral Concannon says we may all be flying. What are you waiting for?'

'I was waiting for Master Gavin to come along.'

'I don't see why he should, really—which would you rather, Gavin?'

Admiral Concannon's expression did not easily change, and did not change now. His features were severely clear cut; his figure was nervy and spare; and he had an air of eating himself—due, possibly, to his retirement. His manners of walking, talking and standing, though all to be recognized at a distance, were vehemently impersonal. When in anything that could be called repose he usually kept his hands in his pockets—the abrupt extraction of one hand, for the purpose of clicking thumb and finger together, was the nearest thing to a gesture he ever made. His voice and step had become familiar, among the few nocturnal sounds of the avenue, some time before Gavin had seen his face, for he escorted Mrs. Nicholson home from parties to which she had been wilful enough to walk. Looking out one night, after the hall door shut, Gavin had seen the head of a cigarette, immobile, pulsating sharply under the dark trees. The Concannons had

settled at Southstone for Mrs. Concannon's health's sake: their two daughters attended one of the schools.

Liberated into this blue height, Gavin could afford to look down in triumph at the sea by whose edge he had lately stood. But the Admiral said: 'Another short turn, perhaps?'—since they were to *be* three, they had better be three in motion. Mrs. Nicholson raised her parasol, and the three moved off down the Promenade with the dignified aimlessness of swans. Ahead, the distance dissolved, the asphalt quivered in heat; and she, by walking between her two companions, produced a democracy of masculine trouble into which age did not enter at all. As they passed the bandstand she said to Gavin: 'Admiral Concannon has just been saying that there is going to be a war'.

Gavin glanced across at the Admiral, who remained in profile. Unassisted and puzzled, he said: 'Why?'

'Why, indeed?' she agreed. 'There!' she said to the Admiral. 'It's no good trying to tease me, because I never believe you.' She glanced around her and added: 'After all, we live in the present day! History is quite far back; it is sad, of course, but it does seem silly. I never even cared for history at school; I was glad when we came to the end of it.'

'And when, my dear, did you come to the end of history?'

'The year I put up my hair. It had begun to be not so bad from the time we started catching up with the present; and I was glad I had stayed at school long enough to be sure that it had all ended happily. But oh, those unfortunate people in the past! It seems unkind to say so, but can it have been their faults? They can have been no more like us than cats and dogs. I suppose there *is* one reason for learning history—one sees how long it has taken to make the world nice. Who on earth could want to upset things now?—No one could want to,' she said to the Admiral. 'You forget the way we behave now, and there's no other way. Civilized countries are polite to each other, just as you and I are to the people we know, and uncivilized countries are put down—but, if one thinks, there are beautifully few of those. Even savages really prefer wearing hats and coats. Once people wear hats and coats and can turn on electric light, they would no more want to be silly than you or I do. Or *do* you want to be silly?' she said to the Admiral.

He said: 'I did not mean to upset you'.

'You don't,' she said. 'I should not dream of suspecting *any* civilized country!'

'Which civilized country?' said Gavin. 'France?'

'For your information,' said the Admiral coldly, 'it is Germany we should be preparing to fight, for the reason that she is preparing to fight us.'

'I have never been happier anywhere,' said Mrs. Nicholson, more near definitely than usual. 'Why,' she added, turning to Gavin, 'if it were not for Germany, now I come to think of it, you would not be here!'

The Admiral, meanwhile, had become intent on spearing on the tip of his cane a straying fragment of paper, two inches torn off a letter, that was defiling the Promenade. Lips compressed, he crossed to a litter basket (which had till then stood empty, there being no litter) and knocked the fragment into it off his cane. He burst out: 'I should like to know what this place is coming to—we shall have trippers next!'

This concern his beautiful friend *could* share—and did so share that harmony was restored. Gavin, left to stare out to sea, reflected on one point in the conversation: he could never forget that the Admiral had called Mrs. Nicholson 'My dear'.

Also, under what provocation had the Admiral threatened Mrs. Nicholson with war? . . . Back at Gavin's home again, once more with his parents, nothing was, after all, so impossible: this was outside the zone of electric light. As late summer wore slowly over the Midlands, the elms in the Doddingtons' park casting lifeless slate-coloured shadows over sorrel, dung, thistles and tufted grass, it was borne in on Gavin that this existence belonged, by its nature, to *any* century. It was unprogressive. It had stayed as it was while, elsewhere, history jerked itself painfully off the spool; it could hardly be more depressed by the fateful passage of armies than by the flooding of tillage or the failure of crops; it was hardly capable, really, of being depressed further. It was an existence mortgaged to necessity; it was an inheritance of uneasiness, tension and suspicion. One could pre-assume the enmity of weather, prices, mankind, cattle. It was this dead weight of existence that had supplied to history not so much the violence or the futility that had been, as she said, apparent to Mrs. Nicholson, but its repetitive harshness and its power to scar. This existence had no volition, but could not stop; and its never



stopping, because it could not, made history's ever stopping the less likely. No signs of, even, an agreeable pause were to be seen round Doddington Hall. Nor could one, at such a distance from Southstone, agree that time had laboured to make the world nice.

Gavin now saw his mother as Mrs. Nicholson's friend. Indeed, the best of the gowns in which Edith went out to dinner, when forced to go out to dinner, had been Lilian's once, and once or twice worn by her. Worn by Edith, they still had the exoticism of gifts, and dispelled from their folds not only the giver's sachets but the easy pitiful lovingness of the giver's mood. In them, Gavin's mother's thin figure assumed a grace whose pathos was lost to him at the time. While the brown-yellow upward light of the table oil lamp unkindly sharpened the hollows in Mrs. Doddington's face and throat, Gavin, thrown sideways out of his bed, fingered the mousseline or caressed the satin of the skirts with an adoring absorption that made his mother uneasy—for fetichism is, still, to be apprehended by those for whom it has never had any name. She would venture: 'You like, then, to see me in pretty clothes?' . . . It was, too, in the first of these intermissions between his visits to Southstone that he, for the first time, took stock of himself, of his assets—the evident pleasingness of his manner; his looks—he could take in better and better part his elder brother's jibes at his pretty-prettiness—his quickness of mind, which at times made even his father smile; and his masculinity, which, now he tried it out, gave him unexpected command of small situations. At home, nights were not a waste: he attached himself to his thoughts, which took him, by seven-league strides, onward to his next visit. He rehearsed, using his mother, all sorts of little gratuities of behaviour, till she exclaimed: 'Why, Lilian has made quite a little page of you!' At her heels round the garden or damp extensive offices of the Hall, at her elbow as she peered through her letters or resignedly settled to her accounts, he reiterated: 'Tell me about Germany'.

'Why Germany?'

'I mean, the year you were there.'

A gale tore the slates from the Hall stables, brought one tree down on to a fence and another to block the drive, the night before Gavin left for Southstone. This time he travelled alone. At Southstone, dull shingly roaring thumps from the beach travelled as far inland as the railway station; from the Promenade—on

which, someone said, it was all but impossible to stand upright—there came a whistling strain down the avenues. It was early January. Rockham was kept to the house by a nasty cold; so it was Mrs. Nicholson who, with brilliantly heightened colour, holding her muff to the cheek on which the wind blew, was on the station platform to meet Gavin. A porter, tucking the two of them into the waiting carriage, replaced the footwarmer under the fur rug. She said: 'How different this is from when you were with me last. Or do you like winter?'

'I like anything, really.'

'I remember one thing you don't like: you said you didn't like thoughts.' As they drove past a lighted house from which music came to be torn about by the wind, she remembered: 'You've been invited to several parties'.

He was wary: 'Shall you be going to them?'

'Why, yes; I'm sure I *could* go,' she said.

Her house was hermetic against the storm: in the drawing-room, heat drew out the smell of violets. She dropped her muff on the sofa, and Gavin stroked it—'It's like a cat,' he said quickly, as she turned round. 'Shall I have a cat?' she said. 'Would you like me to have a cat?' All the other rooms, as they went upstairs, were tawny with fires that did not smoke.

Next morning, the wind had dropped; the sky reflected on everything in its mild brightness; trees, houses and pavements glistened like washed glass. Rockham, puffy and with a glazed upper lip, said: 'Baster Gavid, you've brought us better weather'. Having blown her nose with what she seemed to hope was exhaustive thoroughness, she concealed her handkerchief in her bosom as guiltily as though it had been a dagger. 'Badam,' she said, 'doesn't like be to have a cold. Poor Bisses Codcadded,' she added, 'has been laid up agaid'.

Mrs. Concannon's recovery must be timed for the little dinner party that they were giving. Her friends agreed that she ought to reserve her strength. On the morning of what was to be the day it was, therefore, the Admiral whom one met out shopping: Gavin and Mrs. Nicholson came on him moodily selecting flowers and fruit. Delayed late autumn and forced early spring flowers blazed, under artificial light, against the milder daylight outside the florist's plate glass. 'For tonight, for the party?'

exclaimed Mrs. Nicholson. 'Oh, let us have carnations, scarlet carnations!'

The Admiral hesitated. 'I think Constance spoke of chrysanthemums, white chrysanthemums.'

'Oh, but these are so washy, so like funerals. They will do poor Constance no good, if she still feels ill.'

Gavin, who had examined the prices closely, in parentheses said: 'Carnations are more expensive'.

'No, wait!' cried Mrs. Nicholson, gathering from their buckets all the scarlet carnations that were in reach, and gaily shaking the water from their stems. 'You must let me send these to Constance, because I am so much looking forward to tonight. It will be delightful.'

'I hope so,' the Admiral said. 'But I'm sorry to say we shall be an uneven number: we have just heard that poor Massingham has dropped out. Influenza.'

'Bachelors shouldn't have influenza, should they? But then, why not ask somebody else?'

'So very much at the last moment, that might seem a bit—informal.'

'Dear me,' she teased, 'have you really got *no* old friend?'

'Constance does not feel . . .'

Mrs. Nicholson's eyebrows rose: she looked at the Admiral over the carnations. This was one of the moments when the Admiral could be heard to click his finger and thumb. 'What a pity,' she said. 'I don't care for lopsided parties. *I* have one friend who is not touchy—invite Gavin!'

To a suggestion so completely outrageous, who was to think of any reply? It was a *coup*. She completed, swiftly: 'Tonight, then? We shall be with you at about eight.'

Gavin's squiring of Mrs. Nicholson to the Concannons' party symptomized this phase of their intimacy; without being, necessarily, its highest point. Rockham's cold had imperilled Rockham's prestige: as intervener or arbiter she could be counted out. There being no more talk of these odious drops to the beach, Gavin exercised over Mrs. Nicholson's mornings what seemed a conqueror's rights to a terrain; while with regard to her afternoons she showed a flattering indecision as to what might not please him or what he could not share. At her tea table, his position was made subtly manifest to her guests. His bedtime was

becoming later and later; in vain did Rockham stand and cough in the hall; more than once or twice he had dined downstairs. When the curtains were drawn, it was he who lit the piano candles, then stood beside her as she played—ostensibly to turn over the music, but forgetting the score to watch her hands. At the same time, he envisaged their two figures as they would appear to someone—his other self—standing out there in the cold dark of the avenue, looking between the curtains into the glowing room. One evening, she sang, ‘Two eyes of grey that used to be so bright’.

At the end, he said: ‘But that’s supposed to be a song sung by a man to a woman’.

Turning on the piano stool, she said: ‘Then you must learn it’. He objected: ‘But your eyes are not grey’.

Indeed they were never neutral eyes. Their sapphire darkness, with that of the sapphire pendant she was wearing, was struck into by the Concannons’ electric light. That round fitment on pulleys, with a red silk frill, had been so adjusted above the dinner table as to cast down a vivid circle, in which the guests sat. The stare and sheen of the cloth directly under the light appeared supernatural. The centerpiece was a silver or plated pheasant, around whose base the carnations—slightly but strikingly ‘off’ the red of the shade, but pre-eminently flattering in their contrast to Mrs. Nicholson’s orchid *glacé* gown—were bunched in four silver cornets. This was a party of eight: if the Concannons had insisted on stressing its ‘littleness’, it was, still, the largest that they could hope to give. The evident choiceness of the guests, the glitter and the mathematical placing of the silver and glass, the prompt, meticulous service of the dishes by maids whose suspended breath could be heard—all, all bespoke art and care. Gavin and Mrs. Nicholson were so placed as to face one another across the table: her glance contained him, from time to time, in its leisurely, not quite attentive play. He wondered whether she felt, and supposed she must, how great had been the effrontery of their entrance.

For this dinner party lost all point if it were not *de rigueur*. The Concannon daughters, even (big girls, but with hair still down their backs) had, as not qualified for it, been sent out for the evening. It, the party, had been balanced up and up on itself like a house of cards: built, it remained as precarious. Now the structure



trembled, down to its base, from one contemptuous flip at its top story—Mrs. Nicholson's caprice of bringing a little boy. Gavin perceived that night what he was not to forget: the helplessness, in the last resort, of society—which he was never, later, to be able to think of as a force. The pianola-like play of the conversation did not drown the nervousness round the table.

At the head of the table the Admiral leaned just forward, as though pedalling the pianola. At the far end, an irrepressible cough from time to time shook Mrs. Concannon's decoltagé and the crystal *pince-nez* which, balanced high on her face, gave her a sensitive blankness. She had the *devote* air of some sailors' wives, and was heroic in pale blue without a wrap—arguably, nothing could make her iller. The Admiral's pride in his wife's courage passed a current over the silver pheasant. For Mrs. Concannon, joy in sustaining all this for his sake, and confidence in him, provided a light armour: she possibly did not feel what was felt for her. To Gavin she could not have been kinder; to Mrs. Nicholson she had only and mildly said: 'He will not be shy, I hope, if he does not sit beside you?'

Rearrangement of the table at the last moment could not but have disappointed one or other of the two gentlemen who had expected to sit, and were now sitting, at Mrs. Nicholson's right and left hand. More and more, as course followed course, these two showed how highly they rated their good fortune—indeed, the censure around the rest of the table only acted for them, like heat drawing out scent, to heighten the headiness of her immediate aura. Like the quick stuff of her dress her delinquency, even, gave out a sort of shimmer: while she, neither arch nor indolent, turned from one to the other her look—if you like, melting; for it dissolved her pupils, which had never been so dilated, dark, as tonight. In this look, as dinner proceeded, the two flies, ceasing to struggle, drowned.

The reckoning would be on the way home. Silent between the flies' wives, hypnotized by the rise and fall of Mrs. Nicholson's pendant, Gavin ate on and on. The ladies' move to the drawing-room sucked him along with it in the wake of the last skirt. It was without a word that, at the end of the evening, the Admiral saw Mrs. Nicholson to her carriage—Gavin, like an afterthought or a monkey, nipping in under his host's arm extended to hold open the carriage door. Light from the porch, as they drove

off, fell for a moment longer on that erect form and implacable hatchet face. Mrs. Nicholson seemed to be occupied in gathering up her skirts to make room for Gavin. She then leaned back in her corner, and he in his: not a word broke the tension of the short dark drive home. Not till she had dropped her cloak in front of her drawing-room fire did she remark: 'The Admiral's angry with me'.

'Because of me?'

'Oh dear no; because of her. If I did not think to be angry was very silly, I could almost be a little angry with him.'

'But you meant to make him angry, didn't you?' Gavin said.

'Only because he's silly,' said Mrs. Nicholson. 'If he were not so silly, that poor unfortunate creature would stop coughing: she would either get better or die.' Still standing before her mantel-piece, she studied some freesias in a vase—dispassionately, she pinched off one fading bloom, rolled it into a wax pill between her thumb and finger, then flicked it away to sizzle in the heart of the fire. 'If people,' she said, 'give a party for no other reason but to show off their marriage, what kind of evening can one expect? However, I quite enjoyed myself. I hope you did.'

Gavin said: 'Mrs. Concannon's quite old. But then, so's the Admiral.'

'He quite soon will be, at this rate,' said Mrs. Nicholson. 'That's why he's so anxious to have that war. One would have thought a man could just be a man. What's the matter, Gavin; what are you staring at?'

'That is your most beautiful dress.'

'Yes; that's why I put it on.' Mrs. Nicholson sat down on a low blue velvet chair and drew the chair to the fire: she shivered slightly. 'You say such sweet things, Gavin: what fun we have!' Then, as though the seconds of silence ticked off over her head by the little Dresden clock or her own words had taken effect with her, she turned and, with an impulsive movement, invited him closer to her side. Her arm stayed round him; her short puffed sleeve, disturbed by the movement, rustled down into silence. In the fire a coal fell apart, releasing a seam of gas from which spurted a pale tense quivering flame, 'Aren't you glad we are back?' she said, 'that we are only you and me? Oh, why endure such people when all the time there is the whole world! Why do I stay on and on here; what am I doing? Why don't we

go right away somewhere, Gavin; you and I: To Germany, or into the sun? Would that make you happy?

'That—that flame's so funny,' he said, not shifting his eyes from it.

She dropped her arm and cried, in despair: 'After all, what a child you are!'

'I am not.'

'Anyhow, it's late; you must go to bed.'

She transmuted the rise of another shiver into a slight yawn.

Overcharged and trembling, he gripped his way, flight by flight, up the polished bannister rail, on which his palms left patches of mist; pulling himself away from her up the staircase as he had pulled himself towards her up the face of the cliff.

After that midwinter visit there were two changes: Mrs. Nicholson went abroad, Gavin went to school. He overheard his mother say to his father that Lilian found Southstone this winter really too cold to stay in. 'Or, has made it too hot to stay in?' said Mr. Doddington, from whose disapproval the story of Gavin and the Concannons' party had not been able to be kept. Edith Doddington coloured, loyal, and said no more. During his first term, Gavin received at school one bright picture postcard of Mentone. The carefully chosen small preparatory school confronted him, after all, with fewer trials than his parents had feared and his brother hoped. His protective adaptability worked quickly; he took enough colour, or colourlessness, from where he was to pass among the others, and along with them—a civil and indifferent little boy. His improved but never quite certain health got him out of some things and secured others—rests from time to time in the sick-room, teas by the matron's fire. This spectacled woman was not quite unlike Rockham; also, she was the most approachable edge of the grown-up ambience that connected him, however remotely, with Mrs. Nicholson. At school, his assets of feeling remained, one would now say, frozen.

His Easter holidays had to be spent at home; his summer holidays exhausted their greater part in the same concession to a supposed attachment. Not until September was he despatched to Southstone, for a week, to be set up before his return to school.

That September was an extension of summer. An admirable company continued its season of light opera at the theatre, in whose gardens salvias blazed. The lawns, shorn to the roots after

weeks of mowing, were faintly blond after weeks of heat. Visitors were still many; and residents, after the fastidious retreat of August, were returning—along the Promenade, all day long, parasols, boater hats and light dresses flickered against the dense blue gauze backdrop that seldom let France be seen. In the evenings the head of the pier was a lighted musical box above the not yet cooling sea. Rare was the blade of chill, the too crystal morning or breathlike blur on the distance that announced autumn. Down the avenues the dark green trees hardened but did not change: if a leaf did fall, it was brushed away before anyone woke.

If Rockham remarked that Gavin was now quite a little man, her mistress made no reference to his schoolboy state. She did once ask whether the Norfolk jacket that had succeeded his sailor blouse were not, in this weather, a little hot; but that he might be expected to be more gruff, mum, stand-offish or awkward than formerly did not appear to strike her. The change, if any, was in her. He failed to connect—why should he?—her new languor, her more marked contrarieties and her odd little periods of askance musing with the illness that was to be her death. She only said the summer had been too long. Until the evenings she and Gavin were less alone; for she rose late; and, on their afternoon drives through the country, inland along the coast or towards the downs, they were as often as not accompanied by, of all persons, Mrs. Concannon. On occasions when Mrs. Concannon returned to Mrs. Nicholson's house for tea, the Admiral made it his practice to call for her. The Concannons were very much occupied with preparations for another social event: a Southstone branch of the Awaken Britannia League was to be inaugurated by a drawing-room meeting at their house. The daughters were busy folding and posting leaflets. Mrs. Nicholson, so far, could be pinned down to nothing more than a promise to send cakes from her own, or rather her cook's kitchen.

'But at least,' pleaded Mrs. Concannon, at tea one afternoon, 'you should come if only to hear what it is about.'

By five o'clock, in September, Mrs. Nicholson's house cast its shadow across the avenue on to the houses opposite, which should otherwise have received the descending sun. In revenge, they cast a shadow back through her bow window: everything in the drawing-room seemed to exist in copper-mauve glass, or as though



reflected into a tarnished mirror. At this hour, Gavin saw the pale walls, the silver lamp-stems, the transparent frills of the cushions with a prophetic feeling of their impermanence. At her friend's words, Mrs. Nicholson's hand, extended, paused for a moment over the cream-jug. Turning her head she said: 'But I know what it is about; and I don't approve'.

With so little reference to the Admiral were these words spoken that he might not have been there. There, however, he was, standing drawn up above the low tea-table, cup and saucer in hand. For a moment, not speaking, he weighed his cup with a frown that seemed to ponder its exact weight. He then said: 'Then, logically, you should not be sending cakes'.

'Lilian', said Constance Concannon fondly, 'is never logical with regard to her friends'.

'Aren't I?' said Mrs. Nicholson. 'But cake, don't you think, makes everything so much nicer? You can't offer people nothing but disagreeable ideas.'

'You are too naughty, Lilian. All the League wants is that we should be alert and thoughtful. Perhaps Gavin would like to come?'

Mrs. Nicholson turned on Gavin a considering look from which complicity seemed to be quite absent; she appeared, if anything, to be trying to envisage him as alert and thoughtful. And the Admiral, at the same moment, fixed the candidate with a measuring eye. 'What may come,' he said, 'is bound, before it is done, to be his affair.' Gavin made no reply to the proposition—and it was found, a minute or two later, that the day fixed for the drawing-room meeting was the day fixed for his return home. School began again after that. 'Well, what a pity,' Mrs. Concannon said.

The day approached. The evenings were wholly theirs, for Mrs. Nicholson dined out less. Always, from after tea, when any guests had gone, he began to reign. The apartnesses and frustrations of the preceding hours, and, most of all, the occasional dissonances that those could but produce between him and her, sent him pitching towards the twilight in a fever that rose as the week went on. This fever, every time, was confounded by the sweet pointlessness of the actual hour when it came. The warmth that lingered in the exhausted daylight made it possible for Mrs. Nicholson to extend herself on the *chaise longue* in the bow

window. Seated on a stool at the foot of the *chaise longue*, leaning back against the frame of the window, Gavin could see, through the side pane of the glass projection in which they sat, the salvias smouldering in the theatre gardens. As it was towards these that her chair faced, in looking at them he was looking away from her. On the other hand, they were looking at the same thing. So they were on the evening that was his last. At the end of a minute or two of silence she exclaimed: 'No, I don't care, really, for scarlet flowers. You do?'

'Except carnations?'

'I don't care for public flowers. And you look and look at them till I feel quite lonely.'

'I was only thinking, *they* will be here tomorrow.'

'Have you been happy this time, Gavin? I haven't sometimes thought you've been quite so happy. Has it been my fault?'

He turned, but only to finger the fringe of the Kashmir shawl that had been spread by Rockham across her feet. Not looking up, he said 'I have not seen you so much'.

'There are times,' she said, 'when one seems to be at the other side of a glass. One sees what is going on, but one cannot help it. It may be what one does not like, but one cannot feel.'

'Here, I always feel.'

'Always feel what?' she remotely and idly asked.

'I just mean, here, I feel. I don't feel, anywhere else.'

'And what is "here"? ' she said, with tender mocking obtuseness. 'Southstone? What do you mean by "here"?'

'Near you.'

Mrs. Nicholson's attitude, her repose, had not been come at carelessly. Apparently, relaxed, but not supine, she was supported by six or seven cushions—behind her head, at the nape of her neck, between her shoulders, under her elbows and in the small of her back. The slipperiness of this architecture of comfort enjoined stillness—her repose depended on each cushion's staying just where it was. Up to now, she had lain with her wrists crossed on her dress: a random turn of the wrist or flexing of fingers were the nearest things to gestures she permitted herself—and, indeed, these had been enough. *Now*, her beginning to say, 'I wonder if they were right . . .' must, though it sounded nothing more than reflective, have been accompanied by an incautious movement, for a cushion fell with a plump to the ground. Gavin went

round, recovered the cushion and stood beside her; they eyed one another with communicative amazement, as though a third person had spoken and they were uncertain if they had heard aright. She arched her waist up and Gavin replaced the cushion. He said: 'If who were right?'

'Rockham . . . The Admiral. She's always hinting, he's always saying, that I'm in some way thoughtless and wrong with you.'

'Oh, him.'

'I know,' she said. 'But you'll say good-bye to him nicely?'

He shrugged. 'I shan't see him again—this time.'

She hesitated. She was about to bring out something that, though slight, must be unacceptable. 'He is coming in,' she said 'for a moment, just after dinner, to fetch the cakes.'

'Which cakes?'

'The cakes for tomorrow. I had arranged to send them round in the morning, but that would not do; no, that would not be soon enough. Everything is for the Admiral's meeting to make us ready, so everything must be ready in good time.'

When, at nine o'clock, the Admiral's ring was heard, Mrs. Nicholson, indecisively, put down her coffee cup. A wood fire, lit while they were at dinner, was blazing languidly in the already warm air: it was necessary to sit at a distance from it. While the bell still rang, Gavin rose, as though he had forgotten something, and left the drawing-room. Passing the maid on her way to open the front door, he made a bolt upstairs. In his bedroom, Rockham was in possession: his trunk waited, open, bottom layer packed; her mending basket was on the bureau; she was taking a final look through his things—his departure was to be early tomorrow morning. 'Time flies,' she said. 'You're no sooner come than you're gone.' She continued to count handkerchiefs, to stack up shirts. 'I'd have thought,' she said, 'you'd have wanted to bring your school cap.'

'Why? Anyway, it's a silly beastly old colour.'

'You're too old-fashioned,' she said sharply. 'It was high time somebody went to school. Now you *have* come up, just run down again, there's a good boy, and ask Madam if there's anything for your mother. If it's books, they ought to go in here among your boots.'

'The Admiral's there.'

'Well, my goodness, you know the Admiral!'

Gavin played for time, on the way down, by looking into the rooms on every floor. Their still only partial familiarity, their fullness with objects that, in the half light coming in from the landing, he could only half perceive and did not dare touch, made him feel he was still only at the first chapter of the mystery of the house. He wondered how long it would be before he saw them again. Fear of Rockham's impatience, of her calling down to ask what he was up to, made him tread cautiously on the thickly carpeted stairs: he gained the hall without having made a sound. Here he smelled the fresh-baked cakes, waiting in a hamper on the hall table. The drawing-room door stood ajar, on, for a minute, dead silence. The Admiral must have gone, without the cakes.

But then the Admiral spoke. 'You must see, there is nothing more to be said. I am only sorry I came. I did not expect you to be alone.'

'For once, that is not my fault,' replied Mrs. Nicholson, unsteadily. 'I do not even know where the child is.' In a voice that hardly seemed to be hers she cried out softly: 'Then this is to go on always? What more do you ask? What else am I to be or do?'

'There's nothing more you can do. And all you must be is, happy.'

'How easy,' Mrs. Nicholson said.

'You have always said that that was easy, for you. For my own part, I have never considered happiness. There you misunderstood me, quite from the first.'

'Not quite. Was I wrong in thinking you were a man?'

'I'm a man, yes. But I'm not that sort.'

'That is too subtle for me,' said Mrs. Nicholson.

'On the contrary, it is too simple for you. You ignore the greater part of my life. You cannot be blamed, perhaps; you have only known me since I was cursed with too much time on my hands. Your—your looks, charm and gaiety, my dear Lilian, I'd have been a fool not to salute at their full worth. Beyond that, I'm not such a fool as I may have seemed. Fool?—all things considered, I could not have been simply that without being something a good deal viler.'

'I have been nice to Constance,' said Mrs. Nicholson.



'Vile in my own eyes.'

'I know, that is all you think of.'

'I see, now, where you are in your element. You know as well as I do what your element is; which is why there's nothing more to be said. Flirtation's always been off my beat—so far off my beat, as a matter of fact, that I didn't know what it was when I first saw it. There, no doubt, I was wrong. If you can't live without it, you cannot, and that is that. If you have to be dangled after, you no doubt will be. But don't, my dear girl, go for that to the wrong shop. It would have been enough, where I am concerned, to watch you making a ninny of that unfortunate boy.'

'Who, poor little funny Gavin?' said Mrs. Nicholson. 'Must I have nothing?—I have no little dog. You would not like it, even, if I had a real little dog. And you expect me to think that you do not care...'

The two voices, which intensity more than caution kept pitched low, ceased. Gavin pushed open the drawing-room door.

The room, as can happen, had elongated. Like figures at the end of a telescope the Admiral and Mrs. Nicholson were to be seen standing before the fire. Of this, not a glint had room to appear between the figures of the antagonists. Mrs. Nicholson, head bent as though to examine the setting of the diamond, was twisting round a ring on her raised left hand—a lace-edged handkerchief, like an abandoned piece of stage property, had been dropped and lay on the hearthrug near the hem of her skirts. She gave the impression of having not moved: if they had not, throughout, been speaking from this distance, the Admiral must have taken a step forward. But this, on his part, must have been, and must be, all—his head was averted from her, his shoulders were braced back, and behind his back he imprisoned one of his own wrists in a handcuff grip that shifted only to tighten. The heat from the fire must have made necessary, probably for the Admiral when he came, the opening of a window behind the curtains; for, as Gavin advanced into the drawing-room, a burst of applause entered from the theatre, and continued, drowning the music which had begun again.

Not a tremor recorded the moment when Mrs. Nicholson knew Gavin was in the room. Obliquely and vaguely turning her bowed head she extended to him, in an unchanged look,

what might have been no more than an invitation to listen, also, to the music. 'Why, Gavin,' she said at last, 'we were wondering where you were.'

Here he was. From outside the theatre, stink still travelled to him from the lorry whose engine was being run. Nothing had changed in the colourless afternoon. Without knowing, he had plucked a leaf of the ivy which now bred and fed upon her house. A soldier, passing behind him to join the others, must have noticed his immobility all the way down the avenue: for the soldier said, out of the side of his mouth: 'Annie doesn't live here any more.' Gavin Doddington, humiliated, affected to study the ivy leaf, whose veins were like arbitrary, vulgar fate-lines. He thought he remembered hearing of metal ivy; he knew he had seen ivy carved round monuments to signify fidelity, regret, or the tomb-defying tenaciousness of memory—what you liked. Watched by the soldiers, he did not care to make the gesture that would be involved by throwing the leaf away: instead, he shut his hand on it, as he turned from the house. Should he go straight to the station, straight back to London? Not while the impression remained so strong. On the other hand, it would be a long time before the bars opened.

Another walk round Southstone, this afternoon, was necessary: there must be a decrescendo. From his tour of annihilation, nothing out of the story was to be missed. He walked as though he were carrying a guide-book.

Once or twice he caught sight of the immune downs, on the ascent to whose contours war had halted the villas. The most open view was, still, from the gates of the cemetery, past which he and she had so often driven without a thought. Through those gates, the extended dulling white marble vista said to him, only, that the multiplicity of the new graves, in thirty years, was enough in itself to make the position of hers indifferent—she might, once more, be lying beside her husband. On the return through the town towards the lip of the plateau overhanging the sea, the voidness and the air of concluded meaning about the plan of Southstone seemed to confirm her theory: history, after this last galvanized movement forward, had come, as she expected, to a full stop. It had only not stopped where, or as, she foresaw. Crossing the Promenade obliquely, he made, between

wire entanglements, for the railings; to become one more of the spaced-out people who leaned along them, willing to see a convoy or gazing with indifference towards liberated France. The path and steps up the cliff face had been destroyed; the hand rail hung out rotting into the air.

Back into the shopping centre, he turned a quickening step, past the shuttered, boarded or concave windows, towards the corner florist's where Mrs. Nicholson had insisted on the carnations. But this had received a direct hit: the entire corner was gone. When time takes our revenges out of our hands it is, usually, to execute them more slowly: her vindictiveness, more thorough than ours, might satisfy us, if, in the course of her slowness, we did not forget. In this case, however, she had worked in the less than a second of detonation. Gavin Doddington paused where there was no florist—was he not, none the less, entitled to draw a line through this?

Not until after some time back in the bar did it strike him—there had been one omission. He had not yet been to the Concannons'. He pushed his way out: it was about seven o'clock; twenty minutes or so before the black-out. They had lived in a crescent set just back from a less expensive reach of the Promenade. On his way, he passed houses and former hotels occupied by soldiers or A.T.S. who had not yet gone. These, from top to basement, were in a state of naked, hard, lemon-yellow illumination. Interposing dark hulks gave you the feeling of nothing more than their recent military occupation. The front door of the Concannons' crescent opened, on the inland side, into a curved street, which, for some military reason now probably out of date, had been blocked at the near end: Gavin had to go round. Along the pavements under the front door steps there was so much wire that he was thrust out into the road—opposite only one house was there an inviting gap in the loops. Admiral Concannon, having died in the last war, could not have obtained this as a concession—all the same this *was* as the number faintly confirmed, his house. Nobody now but Gavin recognized its identity or its importance. Here had dwelled, and here continued to dwell, the genius of Southstone that now was. Twice over had there been realized the Admiral's alternative to love.

The Concannons' dining-room window, with its high triple sashes, was raised some distance above the street. Gavin, standing

opposite it, looked in at an A.T.S. girl seated at a table. She faced the window, the dusk and him. From above her head, a naked electric light bulb, on a flex shortened by being knotted, glared on the stripped, whitish walls of the room and emphasized the fact that she was alone. In her khaki shirt, sleeves rolled up, she sat leaning her bare elbows on the bare table. Her face was abrupt with youth. She turned one wrist, glanced at the watch on it, then resumed her steady stare through the window, downwards, at the dusk in which Gavin stood.

It was thus that, for the second time in his life, he saw straight up into eyes that did not see him. The intervening years had given him words for trouble: a phrase, '*l'horreur de mon néant*', darted across his mind.

At any minute, the girl would have to approach the window to do the black-out—for that, along this coast, was still strictly enforced. It was worth waiting. He lighted a cigarette: she looked at her watch again. When she did rise it was, first, to unhook from a peg beside the dining-room door not only her tunic but her cap. Her being dressed for the street, when she did reach up, and, with a succession of movements he liked to watch, begin to twitch the black stuff across the window, made it his object *not* to be seen—just yet. Light staggered, a moment longer, on the desiccated pods of the wallflowers that, seeded from the front garden, had sprung up between the cracks of the pavement, and on the continuous regular loops or hoops of barbed wire, through all of which, by a sufficiently long leap, one *could* have projected oneself head foremost, unhurt. At last she had stopped the last crack of light. She had now nothing to do but come out.

Coming smartly down the Concannons' steps, she may just have seen the outline of the civilian waiting, smoking a cigarette. She swerved impassively, if at all. He said: 'A penny for your thoughts'. She might not have heard. He fell into step beside her. Next, appearing to hear what he had not said, she replied: 'No, I'm *not* going your way'.

'Too bad. But there's only one way out—can't get out, you know, at the other end. What have I got to do, then—stay here all night?'

'I don't know, I'm sure.' Unconcernedly humming, she did not even quicken her light but ringing tramp on the curved street.



If he kept abreast with her, it was casually, and at an unpressing distance: this, and the widening sky that announced the open end of the crescent, must have been reassuring. He called across to her: 'That house you came out of, I used to know people who lived there. I was just looking round.'

She turned, for the first time—she could not help it. 'People lived there?' she said. 'Just fancy. I know I'd sooner live in a tomb. And that goes for all this place. Imagine anyone coming here on a holiday!'

'I'm on a holiday.'

'Goodness. What do you do with yourself?'

'Just look round.'

'Well, I wonder how long you stick it out. Here's where we go different ways. Good night.'

'I've got nobody to talk to,' Gavin said, suddenly standing still in the dark. A leaf fluttered by. She was woman enough to halt, to listen, because this had not been said to her. If her, 'Oh yes, we girls have heard that before,' was automatic, it was, still more, wavering. He cast away the end of one cigarette and started lighting another: the flame of the lighter, cupped inside his hands, jumped for a moment over his features. Her first thought was: yes, he's quite old—that went along with his desperate jauntiness. Civilian, yes: too young for the last war, too old for this. A gentleman—they were the clever ones. But he had, she perceived, forgotten about her thoughts—what she saw, in that moment before he snapped down the lighter, stayed on the darkness, puzzling her somewhere outside the compass of her own youth. She had seen the face of somebody dead who was still there—'old' because of the presence, under an icy screen, of a whole stopped mechanism for feeling. Those features had been framed, long ago, for hope. The dents above the nostrils, the lines extending the eyes, the lips' grimacing grip on the cigarette—all completed the picture of someone wolfish. A preyer. But who had said, preyers are preyed upon?

His lower lip came out, thrusting the cigarette up at a debonair angle towards his eyes. 'Not a soul,' he added—this time with calculation, and to her.

'Anyway,' she said sharply, 'I've got a date. Anyway, what made you pick on this dead place? Why not pick on some place where you know someone?'

# SELECTED NOTICES

## 'THE ITALIAN CENTURIES'

IT is a pleasure to take hold of a book in which typography is used rather than exhibited. This is certainly true of this new edition of Burckhardt's *Renaissance in Italy*, a delightful volume which it is astonishing to have produced in wartime. Though Burckhardt makes little particular reference to the graphic arts, this edition contains a supplement of plates selected and annotated by the indefatigable Ludwig Goldscheider. Once again is indicated that exquisite understanding contributing so much to the success of the Phaidon Press. There is nothing one might criticize in the selection of reproductions, which adequately fulfils its aim to provide a visual commentary on the text with which it harmonizes almost completely.

It is, perhaps, not at all insignificant that this essay of Burckhardt's should have been conceived as the final monograph in a projected series to constitute a monumental history of the Middle Ages. Indeed, scholarship more and more inclines to the view that the rupture, if such it were, between the Renaissance and the preceding era was by no means abrupt and clear. Today it is pertinent to inquire if the phenomenon tacitly assumed to have occurred, were, in fact, anything other than the finest flowering of Italian, mediaeval thought. Certainly such typical figures as Leonardo and Francesco Colonna were mediaeval. Oddly enough, however, the epoch Burckhardt covers is one of the few to be taken by latter ages at its own valuation. This fact alone should occasion some attempts at reconsideration, even without the new interest in the Middle Ages which are now being recognized as too soon decried. First, with Goethe, Gothic architecture was rediscovered and now, second, the whole culture and structure of those ages are studied and admired by writers as diverse as Gustave Cohen, Pierre Mabille, C. G. Coulton, Richard McKeon, Andre Breton, not to trifle with Maritain, Don Sturzo and all the tribe of neo-Thomists.

It has been characteristic of Northern historians to cloud over the crystal-bright secular thought of those three centuries that pre-eminently belong to Italy, with the Reformation and all its Puritan paraplegia. Burckhardt makes it abundantly clear what a confusion this Northern attitude is. Probably the knowledge he gained of Italy and the Italians during his visits, particularly the last, when he collected material for his *Cicerone*, fitted him to display in his essay the material, if he did not quite make it his thesis, for a view contrary to Anglo-Germanic prejudgements.

The three hundred years presented in this essay stretch from the birth of Dante to the death of Michelangelo and witness in literature the 'toscaneggiamento' of the Sicilian-Provençal and the Franco-Lombard poetic schools, the emergence of Italian as a literary language, the 'lingua aulica' of Dante's *De Eloquentia Vulgari*. This vernacular though belated in its use, was at once superior to others. Chaucer, Spenser, Shakespeare, Milton were all indebted to it, but it owed them nothing. It was immediately adult and mature; and it avoided the childish myths of Roland and Arthur and Tristan except as vehicles for satire. At the outset this literature expressed that 'Italianita' (dare

I employ this word so recently misused?), that Italian objective and positive quality called either paganism or sensuousness according to the viewpoint. This quality allied to an indigenous irony is markedly represented in some of the important literary relics of the thirteenth century: the 'Cognate', an invective exchange between a pair of sisters-in-law; the *tenzone*, 'Mamma lo tempo e venuto'; the two popular obscene poems *Il Nicchio* and *L'Ugellino*. This quality is typical of the whole age contributing its decisive quota to such a work as the *Hypnerotomachia*, to Valla's thesis *De Voluptate*, to the very life of Lorenzo il Magnifico. This quality it was that made Orcagna impatient with the courtly version of love exported from Provence to write in a famous sonnet:

*L'amore e un trastullo,  
Non e composto de legno ne di osso:  
E a molta gente fa rompere il dosso.*

No doubt this attitude is due to the more or less complete absence of feudalism in Italy. The Hohenstauffen regime in Sicily and Old Calabria was short-lived and certainly failed to establish anything comparable to the systems prevailing in France, Germany and England. Literature from the start belonged to the people; and this people was possessed of a genius and a sensitiveness unequalled except by the Periclean Greeks.

These three hundred years are divisible into three periods, the first ending with the death of Boccaccio in 1375, the second and shortest finishing with the birth of Lorenzo il Magnifico, and the third expiring with Michelangelo. The first is remarkable for the actual formation of Italian literature, including the appearance of Dante's *Commedia*: the second is the age of the Humanists and the last stand of Latin against Italian; the third witnesses the victory of the vulgar tongue and the utilization of the Humanists' discoveries for its greater glories, for example the Aldine Edition of the *Commedia*. Outside literature these periods connect with such dates as the defeat of the Ghibellines in 1264, the year before Dante's birth; within a few years of Boccaccio's death the Babylonish Captivity gave way to the Great Schism; five years after Lorenzo's birth the Turks entered Constantinople; just previous to Michelangelo's death, Charles V resigned the Italian Provinces and subsequently abdicated. All three periods were characterized alike by the constant invasions and wars of foreign rulers who had no scruples in drawing the few independent Italian cities and Prinzelings into their conflicts. Hardly a year passed without there being a foreign army somewhere in Italy. It was not until the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle in 1748 that a few years' tolerable respite from foreign warfare was experienced. Throughout the whole time from 1265 to 1654 the Papacy, as always, exerted its malevolent and unhealthy influence. Indeed the most disastrous consequence of its constant jockeying for temporal power was the Sack of Rome in 1527 by the troops of the Emperor. That event is the more dolorous in that it did not achieve what it might well have, the secularization of the Papal States, and so bring the unification of all Italy in its train. Burckhardt may well be right when he says the Reformation saved the Temporal Power. Certainly the moral regeneration of that time is directly attributable to the activities of the seceders, and this in its turn put an end to 'nipoti' and thus avoided the possible transformation of the Papacy into a dynastic succession.

It is against such a background of turmoil that Italian thought, the legacy of that Roman rhetoric and jurisprudence, the tradition of which was still alive, achieved its undying power. Along with an objective view of the State, 'lo stato' originally signifying the rulers and their party, came the concept of the individual, in Burckhardt's phrase, of free personality. In the Trecento a complete lack of false modesty and hypocrisy, not to say of the fear of singularity, produced at Florence an era in which fashions of dress simply did not exist. Each man and woman dressed individually according to the consummate art with which the Florentines lived. This individualism brought the Mediaeval cosmopolitanism within the reach of the many, while in the scholars whose sole possession it formerly was, it reached heights never since attained. The documents reaching us from that time and place succeed in recreating and delineating characters more vivid than any from other countries whose leaders only acquire personalities as late as the sixteenth century. Until the Tudors in English history, little more can be done than list with the authors of 1066 and all that, a succession of good kings or bad. An English or French *Cento Novelle Antiche* would have been unthinkable. Elsewhere than Italy events were hidden by a veil of myth, faith and ignorance. Hidden, too, by this curtain even from themselves were men and their motives. A comparison of characters from Chaucer and Dante would quickly indicate this difference. It seems that the keen sense of reality given by legal studies, by the free communes, the consciousness of aims, enabled Dante to produce a mature and manly solution of the problems of art.

At Bologna, the most important legal university, Guido Guinicelli had paved the way for Dante by converting the hollow forms and subjects of chivalry into a medium for metaphysical speculation, but with a diction as exact and particular as that of the Troubadours was vague. He was the prophet of the 'dolce stil nuovo' of which Dante was the master. Chaucer however, even with the Italians as his model, could only produce generalizations. His knight for instance

. . . was and that a worthy man,  
That fro the tyme that he first bigan  
To riden out, he loved chivalrie,  
Trouthe and honour, freedom and curtesie.

. . . . .  
He never yet no vileynye ne sayde,  
In al his lyf, unto no manner wight  
He was a verray parfait, gentil knyght.

This description would do for any of Chaucer's knights if not any of his types: characters can hardly be said to exist. Not so Dante's description of Ugolino della Gherardesca da Donoratico:

La bocca sollevo dal fiero pasto  
Quel peccator, forbendola ai capelli  
Dal capo ch'egli avea dietro guasto.

. . . . .  
Quand'ebbe detto cio, con gli occhi torti  
Riprese il teschio misero coi denti,  
Che furo all'osso, come d'un can, forti.



Alongside this development of a powerful literary Italian which was not completely identical with any spoken dialect, though it were predominantly Tuscan, Latin continued to be used. The memory of it was everywhere and in a debased form it was a common language. Throughout the Middle Ages the Italians used it for poetry in which they held the lead, the *Carmina Burana*, rating as the highest of Mediaeval Latin poetry, was certainly the work of an Italian. This poetry was secular in sharp contradistinction to the productions of the University of Paris, which were religious, being mostly hymns. As early as the time of Charlemagne's resuscitation of learning Italian teachers were sought, and it is interesting to note the similarity between the pure Carolingian script and the later letter-forms of the Humanists. In the eleventh century Wippo's panegyric to the Emperor Henry III says:

*Hoc servant Itali post prima crepundia cincti  
Et sudare scholis mandatur tota juvenus.*

Long after education in the north had passed into ecclesiastical hands, secular schools, the descendants of Roman institutions, flourished and taught rhetoric and grammar after the ancient rule. It is this continued existence of non-clerical learning outside the churches and the monasteries that prepared the soil of Italian culture for the magnificent crop of Humanists.

During the seventy years, nearly, from the death of Boccaccio to the birth of Lorenzo de' Medici, a beautiful Latin style appeared and even displaced the powerful vernacular in very many works. The old Roman masters were studied and in some notable instances, Latinists tell us, they were equalled. Certainly the style and the language of the Humanists were superior to those of their immediate predecessors. From this time dates the only recently deposed philological notion of the classical languages' superiority to the Romance languages with their analytical syntax. Greek as well had continued to flourish in the south, the relic of not only Magna Graecia but also the Byzantine Empire. With the fall of Constantinople the influx of Greeks increased. Earlier the Latin translation of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, at which Boccaccio assisted, was made by a Calabrian Greek. Cut off by the chaos of foreign wars and constant invasion, spoken Greek has persisted in parts of Calabria to this day.

So confused today is Humanism with Cartesian values that it has been misrepresented and misunderstood particularly by those who, speaking of it and identifying themselves with it, would be most shocked by the doctrines and attitudes of the more representative Quattrocento scholars. Not the least of them were gathered around Sigismondo Malatesta at Rimini, Aeneas Sylvius who, as Pope Pius II, excommunicated Sigismondo, burnt his effigy and made war upon him, spoke highly of his learning. In too many instances, to be exceptional, Humanism went hand in hand with the monstrous. It, perhaps, could not be otherwise. Secular, sceptical, pagan, independent—all combine to describe their life and their learning, which embraced the writing of Latin Hexameters on venereal disease, 'morbus gallicus'. The Humanists lived fully, violently, excessively one might say. Opponents were not refuted, but annihilated with fierce and astonishing invective, with a vituperation which did not hesitate to employ the foulest language. In this they represent their

age and a certain constant in the Italian character to which the 'tramontano' can hardly be expected to be sympathetic. It can be added, however, that the obscene works of Poggio have enjoyed a widespread popularity on both sides of the Alps, but it is difficult to discover if the North approached anything beyond, to its eye, the filth. Certainly these Humanists were malicious, conceited, profligate and, in many cases, irreligious. This latter quality alone was the cause of their undoing. Once again the Reformation intervened negatively into Italian history. Anxious to stamp out this heresy the Counter-Reformation mercilessly hunted down any disaffection and destroyed those who might have held back the victory of the vernacular language in literature.

It is not to be supposed that the Humanists all wrote only in Latin. Indeed, though they might profess to admire the Latin works of Petrarch and Boccaccio history was busy reversing their judgements. Alberti, however, expressly chose to write in the vernacular, declaring that though the loss of the Italian language were a greater affliction to the Italians than the loss of the Roman Empire, Latin was a dead language and therefore it would be undignified for a modern people to express itself solely by its means. The generation following him, if it did not produce a poetry as lofty and inspired as that of Dante, at any rate followed in the Petrarchan tradition and carried prose to its highest and it was not the least of d'Annunzio's achievements to have recognized this and to have advised the study of such prose for the purification of the Italian language in the nineteenth century.

At the same time the vernacular literature was strengthened by a popular outburst of energetic poetry-making. The people produced an abundance of poetry of lasting beauty alongside almost a superabundance of scurrilous political jangles such as this which vexed Martin:

*Papa Martino, Signor di Piombino,  
Conte di Urbino, non vale un quattrino.*

Of the more beautiful poetry, the laments are noteworthy, some of them so persistent like the Cinquecento lament for Strozzi which can be heard in the country round Siena to this day or the earlier 'Lamento di Otranto' still sung all over the south, being heard even in Naples. As the Cinquecento unfolded, many of these popular songs were gathered and published by the scholars and thus influenced the poetry of the great galaxy who were then manifested, Ariosto, Michelangelo, Vittoria Colonna, Guidiccioni, Angelo di Costanzo, and lastly Tasso at the very edge of the period which Burckhardt treats.

Though notable women had previously appeared, it was only in the hundred and twenty years or so from the birth of Lorenzo, that they seemed to seize the advantages of their equality of position and education. One of them, Vittoria Colonna, ranks with the immortal poets. To understand the age, it is proper to observe that the compliment, 'virago', was not at all equivocal as it would be today. Womanhood was recognized as something other than the pre-suppositions, mysteries and susceptibilities, under which it is hidden today. As Burckhardt points out, woman was regarded as assisting equally with man in the consciousness of energy, of beauty and of a social state full of danger and opposition. Women thus had as powerful characters as the men, so that what might, at other times, pass for immodesty, existed but was not so

recognized. Typical Renaissance women were Isabella Gonzaga and Caterina Sforza, wife and then widow of Girolamo Riario. After defending Forlì first against her husband's murderers and then against Cesare Borgia, though vanquished, this latter earned of all her contemporaries the title, 'prima donna d'Italia'. Similarly the courtesans supplied a nobler relationship than the brothel of later ages. This Burckhardt grudgingly admits and belittles, while referring to the scandalous nature, as if it could have been otherwise, of the literary remains dealing with them. They were esteemed enough for artists of the calibre of Vittore Carpaccio and Bartolomeo Veneto to be commissioned to paint the portraits of some of them (see plates 78 and 79 in this Phaidon Edition). Nevertheless it is the poetry of Vittoria Colonna which truly expresses the quality of the Renaissance woman. Nothing testifies to this achievement better than the interchange and friendship with the greatest of her contemporaries, including the touching intercourse with Michelangelo, who only dared kiss the dead face of this pure lady as he had kissed the living hand.

Above all else the Cinquecento was the age of purists: and Michelangelo's sonnets were tolerated only for their philosophy as today they are admired for other reasons, so unformed were they. They cannot compare at all with the remarkable limpidity and polish of Vittoria Colonna or Bembo or Ariosto. In this latter poet that bright elegance can be seen allied to a delicious irony and burlesque at the expense of chivalry and courtly love, which became typical of Renaissance and, it is pleasant to record, all Italian poetry. With Ariosto, too, becomes visible the final and absolute demise of the Middle Ages. He cannot believe in all the nonsense about paladins with their ludicrous attitudes and impossible situations, their childishness and barbarousness. Ariosto is Italian in doubting all noble motives until they are demonstrated, proved and left unmarred. This is natural in a country where every plunderer arrived with a noble speech and fair promises, and left carrying off something of its treasures.

The final literary achievement of the Renaissance was perhaps the autobiography, those of Cellini and Girolamo Cardano for example. This Cardano was one of the richest and strangest characters of an age where such abounded. His confessions were made with unsparing honesty. 'Cardano admits', says Burckhardt, 'that he cheated at play, that he was vindictive, incapable of all compunction, purposely cruel in his speech. He confesses it without impudence and without feigned contrition, without even wishing to make himself an object of interest, but with the same simple and sincere love of fact which guided him in his scientific researches.' As he wrote, the most odious of alien tyrannies began to make itself felt, to prevent the formation of such natures as his, or, where they existed, to dispose of them. It was the Spanish Inquisition. The Pope even, along with all Italy, came to fear it. Not till Napoleon ventured into Italy was that institution prized away from the social body it all but completely devitalized.

How can the Renaissance be summed up? Is the macaronic *Polifili Hypnerotomachia* with its curious allegory, its love story in full sensuousness, its fount of out-of-the-way knowledge, its quality of consciousness of antiquity, its fresh, open realism—is this the typical Renaissance? Or the life of Lorenzo



il Magnifico? Of Leonardo with his cosmological outlook tempered with scepticism, strangely mediaeval and modern? It cannot but be noticed how the artists and craftsmen of this age lived, in marked contrast to the writers and poets and scholars, in friendly competition with one another, ever ready to help each other. They were the stable element in this society in flux, yet though they fixed the style of painting for centuries after them they achieved no more than their contemporaries. Only today can the world really make use of Macchiavelli.

The Renaissance in Italy was a national, dramatic, passionate movement arising in the special conditions of mediaeval Italy. It was embraced with fervour because it appeared to give life a meaning that the Northern culture seemed to deny. The dark Gothic architecture was barely tolerated and soon overthrown. The secret simmering of classical culture burst forth, and the Italians created the finest literature, art and philosophy of the Middle Ages, so fine in fact that it became the model for modern civilization. The revival of antiquity was the renewed consciousness of Roman origins. If Mussolini so lately vulgarized this descent, it remains nevertheless true and the key to the Renaissance. Burckhardt was aware of that significance and of its constancy in the Italian character which the Spaniards could not brutalize entirely out of existence, nor any of the foreign tyrannies, least of all the recent German occupation of part of the land. Can we be blamed, then, if at this present time, paralleling that of the Renaissance—foreign armies at each other's throats, towns, monuments, the countryside even, destroyed—can we be blamed if we dream of the past and are inspired by it?

TONI DEL RENZIO

*Animal Farm* (A Fairy Story). By George Orwell. Secker & Warburg. 6s.

MR. ORWELL is a revolutionary who is in love with 1910. This ambivalence constitutes his strength and his weakness. Never before has a progressive political thinker been so handicapped by nostalgia for the Edwardian shabby-genteel or the under-dog. It is this political sentimentality which from the literary point of view is his most valid emotion. *Animal Farm* proves it, for it truly is a fairy story told by a great lover of liberty and a great lover of animals. The farm is real, the animals are moving. At the same time it is a devastating attack on Stalin and his 'betrayal' of the Russian revolution, as seen by another revolutionary. The allegory between the animals and the fate of their revolution (they drive out the human beings and plan a Utopia entrusted to the leadership of the pigs—Napoleon—Stalin, Snowball-Trotsky—with the dogs as police, the sheep as yes-men, the two cart-horses, Boxer and Clover, as the noble hard-working proletariat), and the Russian experiment is beautifully worked out, perhaps the most felicitous moment being when the animal 'saboteurs' are executed for some of the very crimes of the Russian trials, such as the sheep who confessed to having 'urinated in the drinking pool' or the goose which kept back six ears of corn and ate them in the night. The fairy tale ends with the complete victory of Napoleon and the pigs, who rule *Animal Farm* with a worse tyranny and a far greater efficiency than its late human owner, the dissolute Mr. Jones.



Politically one might make to Mr. Orwell the same objections as to Mr. Koestler for his essay on Russia in *The Yogi and the Commissar*—both allow their personal bitterness about the betrayed revolution to prejudice their attitude to the facts. But it is arguable that every revolution is 'betrayed' because the violence necessary to achieve it is bound to generate an admiration for violence, which leads to the abuse of power. A revolution is the forcible removal of an obsolete and inefficient ruling-class by a vigorous and efficient one which replaces it for as long as its vitality will allow. The commandments of the Animal Revolution, such as 'no animal shall kill any other animal' or 'all animals are equal' can perhaps never be achieved by a revolutionary seizure of power but only by the spiritual operation of reason or moral philosophy in the animal heart. If we look at Russia without the particular bitterness of the disappointed revolutionary we see that it is an immensely powerful managerial despotism—far more powerful than its Czarist predecessor—where, on the whole, despite a police system which we should find intolerable, the masses are happy, and where great strides in material progress have been made (i.e. independence of women, equality of sexes, autonomy of racial and cultural minorities, utilization of science to improve the standard of living, religious toleration, etc.). If Stalin and his regime were not loved as well as feared the Animal Farm which comprises the greatest land-mass of the world would not have united to roll back the most efficient invading army which the world has ever known—and if in truth Stalin is loved then he and his regime cannot be quite what they appear to Mr. Orwell (indeed Napoleon's final brutality to Boxer—if Boxer symbolises the proletariat, is not paralleled by any incident in Stalin's career—unless the Scorched Earth policy is indicated). But it is unfair to harp on these considerations. *Animal Farm* is one of the most enjoyable books since the war, it is deliciously written, with something of the feeling, the penetration and the verbal economy of Orwell's master, Swift. It deserves a wide sale and a lengthy discussion. Apart from the pleasure it has given me to read, I welcome it for three reasons, because it breaks down some of the artificial reserve with which Russia is written about, or not written about, (a reserve which we do not extend to America—nor they to us), because it restores the allegorical pamphlet to its rightful place as a literary force, and lastly because it proves that Mr. Orwell has not been entirely seduced away by the opinion-airing attractions of weekly journalism from his true vocation, which is to write books.

C. C.

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